

Go for the Gold!

in Child Nutrition

1994 Breakfast Lunch Training



**Material development and design
Jean Bunge and Associates**

**Project Coordinator
Carolyn Hopkins**

**Cover art and printing
University Publications**

**Video Production
University Teleproductions**

Executive Director and Host - Ty Warren

Post Production - John Schiebe

Audio - Britt Fitts

Engineer - Darrell Jordan

Videography - Eddie Gray and Beth Rickenbaker

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1994 BLT Review Team

Chris Bosak
Assistant Director/Nutrition Services
Portland, Oregon

Beverly Cross
Coordinator of Support Materials
NFSMI, Education & Training

Mary Gregoire, PhD, RD
Associate Director
NFSMI, Applied Research

Beth King
Coordinator of Clearinghouse
NFSMI, Technology Transfer

Terry Keisler
Education Associate
South Carolina Department of
Education
Columbia, South Carolina

Peggy Lee
Food Service Director
Norfolk, Virginia

Terri Louise Lloyd-Jones
Nutrition Education & Training Coordinator
Oregon Department of Education
Salem, Oregon

Beverly Lowe, RD
Food Service Director
Richmond, Virginia

Ann Terrell
Food Service Director
Memphis, Tennessee

Joyce Woolington
Food Service Director
Topeka, Kansas



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PREFACE

The National Food Service Management Institute believes that every child will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of effective CNP's, with healthy food choices served in pleasant surroundings by compassionate and empowered people. Child Nutrition personnel have many challenges in achieving and maintaining the quality standards that our customers want and expect. We must do all we can to achieve excellence in school food service to better serve the customer.

Achieving excellence is not a destination, it is a journey. With the presentation of this BLT, **Go For the Gold In Child Nutrition**, the NFSMI provides some additional support for that journey. We believe that training focused on customer service objectives will encourage improvements that contribute to program success, provide extraordinary insight into changing customer needs and wants, and reinforce performance that yields positive results. More than that it helps to create a work environment where every staff member participates on a team finding ways to improve all aspects of the work system.....converting moments of truth into shining moments.

Go for the Gold In Child Nutrition brings added value to the Program, to offer not just high quality meals, but a memorable dining experience. The NFSMI strives to provide you with materials to assist you in delivering training that has a positive impact on performance and productivity. The videotape, handbook and lessons demonstrate how to integrate teamwork, communication, values, creativity and sustainability into continuous quality improvement....qualities needed to create the competitive environment needed to win.

Understanding the concepts contained in the handbook is the first part of the journey. When the Child Nutrition Team has mastered the basic skills taught through the lessons, it will be time to begin the pursuit for the Gold.

GO FOR THE GOLD IN CUSTOMER SERVICE!

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Introduction to Handbook

The most essential element to the success of any business is customer satisfaction. Customers who are satisfied come back, and they tell their friends. Customer service brings in new customers as the word spreads.

Child Nutrition professionals must realize that seeking to satisfy the customer is the key to success. If customers are attracted to the cafeteria because of the quality of the food, the attitude of the employees, the cheerfulness and cleanliness of the facility, they will eat with us. Students may go into the cafeteria because they have to, but we cannot make them want to eat. Programs that truly serve the customer will make them want to participate.

This year the National Food Service Management Institute has developed and compiled materials to assist school food service professionals to put customer service agendas into Child Nutrition Programs. With this information about customer service, we envision Child Nutrition Programs lighting the torch as we Go for the Gold, striving to be the best.

Quality programs attract customers and keep customers. Our goal in Child Nutrition Programs is to feed hungry children, and we can enjoy doing that. When children have a good experience in the cafeteria, they establish good food habits that last for a lifetime. Happy children eating well enhance the job satisfaction of food service staff.

This handbook is intended to provide a concise, easy-to-read discussion of the major topics discussed in the training module. It contains some of the best ideas and practices

in customer service and attempts to relate them to Child Nutrition Programs. A list of books, periodicals, and manuals used in compiling the handbook are included for additional references.

Participation in Child Nutrition Programs will increase when every school or site—whatever the size of the school district—becomes customer service oriented. This orientation will result in better administered programs as the people at the front lines learn to see customers and the organization from a different perspective.

Customers are our most valuable resource. The best advice we can get about how to satisfy customers is not only from customers but also from employees. If we ask for the input and do not use it, we will cease to get it. The bottom line is to listen to what is said—first of all by those persons on the firing line, the employees, and then by those who receive the services, the customers.

When Child Nutrition Programs have the same winning attitude as the commercial food service businesses, perhaps we can be as successful! Ron McGruder, President of Olive Garden Restaurants, says it best: "We want to be a company of champions. Each site must meet the unique needs of customers."

Most customer service employees who fail do so because of attitude. The beginning and end of great customer service is a winning attitude, and our attitude reflects how we feel about ourselves and our job. The attitude we send out is the attitude we get back. We never get a second chance to create a positive first impression.



Go for the Gold In Child Nutrition

Introduction to Notebook

Handbook for CN professionals

The handbook is designed to help program administrators improve customer service in school dining rooms. For so long we have concentrated on accountability and financial survival that perhaps we have neglected what commercial food service operations have always known--that the wants and needs of the customers come first in any successful business.

The handbook assists us to get out of our box and learn to promote our programs, capitalizing on the positive aspects of Child

Nutrition programs. The book is written for easy reading and could become the beginning of ongoing customer service in Child Nutrition Programs over the nation.

The handbook is written not only as a reference book but also as a teaching tool for training managers and food service assistants. We recommended that the supervisor/director or manager study the handbook and view the video before teaching the four lessons for food service assistants.

Video: Go for the Gold

The video is an overview of ways in which to have customer service in Child Nutrition Programs. Taken primarily from video of the Satellite Seminars, it gives an excellent overview of employees, cafeterias, teamwork, and many other phases of the program. It is suggested that the video be

used as an introduction to customer service by the director/supervisor in introducing the subject to managers, and by the manager in introducing the subject to assistants. The video is short and to the point and summarizes what the handbook and lessons are about.

Breakfast Lunch Training Lessons: Go for the Gold

The four lessons are designed for managers to teach to food service assistants. Each lesson is divided so that it may be taught in short segments. Activities are included to reinforce lessons with crossword puzzles for review instead of test questions.

The four lessons are:

- 1) World Class Taste (about food quality)
- 2) On Your Mark (about marketing)
- 3) Sending Signals (about communication)
- 4) On the Line (about the serving line)

On the first page of each segment is a list of items the manager will need to teach the

lesson. Teaching notes are boxed so they are easily identified, and objectives are given in the beginning of each lesson. Rather than transparencies (which are sometimes difficult to use) handouts are included in the lessons.

ASFSA Certification Credit has been approved. A minimum of one hour per lesson is suggested. However, as much time as is desired may be spent on each segment. A certification form as well as a certificate of completion are included in the packet. Both are camera ready.



1994 Breakfast Lunch Training Module

Activity

Handouts

2) ON YOUR MARK

3) SENDING SIGNALS

4) ON THE LINE

1)	Our Business	Reasons for having SFS Ways to get more Business Menus - meal deal Activity Displays	
2)	Personal Selling	Role Playing Promotion choices	
3)	Selling Strategies	Discussion of New & Novel Self Service & Offer vs. Serve	
4)	Competing	Factors which appeal to the customer Marketing Plan Activities	Self Improvement Plan Accompanying Materials
			Review Puzzle Review List Answer Sheet

Instructions for teaching Breakfast Lunch Training lessons

The Breakfast Lunch Training Modules originated in 1992 as a way for a cafeteria manager to train the food service staff, taking only a short time in the working day.

In this fourth year of BLT's, several innovations are incorporated. The handbook is a reference and a way for supervisors to prepare managers to train staff. The lessons are designed for managers to train their staffs. We recommend that where there is a centralized district, the director/supervisor take the time to actually model the lessons for the managers.

Note to supervisors and managers - Before teaching the lessons, please read again chapter 8 in the handbook, *Coaching and Training*. This chapter presents an overview of training and ways to make training more effective.

The supervisor/manager who--

- ▶ trains staff to do the job,
- ▶ motivates them to want to, and
- ▶ keeps them posted on how they're doing,

will have a workteam able and willing to serve the customers.

Training is an investment. Training boosts the value of the capital investment. Trained and skilled employees become our most valuable resource.

Each lesson contains the following:

1. Lesson objectives
2. List of supplies needed by the instructor
3. Handouts (to be reproduced for participants)
4. Training notes (on each page) for instructors
5. Activities to aid in teaching
6. Crossword puzzles (with answer sheets) to use as a review

Lessons are divided into segments so that the trainer might spend as much or as little time on each segment as staff requires.

Note to trainers - Before each lesson, trainers will profit from the following preparation:

- ▶ Study the lessons (training notes are in italic type set off in boxes).
- ▶ Make copies of activity sheets and/or handouts for the segments being taught.
- ▶ Plan the time and announce the schedule in advance to staff.
- ▶ Check the list in the beginning of the lesson to be sure you have everything you need.
- ▶ Prepare a sign-in sheet for each lesson. You will need a record of attendance for yourself and certification credit.
- ▶ Add any additional ideas, materials, and guest speakers that will hold the interest of your staff.

Certification Credit: We recommend that credit be given for the entire course (all four lessons) in hour segments. Each lesson is equivalent to a minimum of one hour credit but may be more if more time is taken. For this reason, it is important to keep attendance records. A certification credit form is included. Each employee requesting certification credit should get a credit form. A camera-ready certificate is included in the package.

Go for the Gold!

in Child Nutrition

**1994 Breakfast Lunch Training Module
CN Professionals' Handbook**



**prepared by
Education and Training
National Food Service Management Institute
University of Mississippi**

**Josephine Martin, Ph.D., R.D.
Executive Director**

**Linda Hoops, Ed.D., R.D.
Director, Education and Training**



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**Material development and design
Jean Bunge and Associates**

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**Project Coordinator
Carolyn Hopkins**

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1994 BLT Review Team

Chris Bosak
Assistant Director/Nutrition Services
Portland, Oregon

Beverly Cross
Coordinator of Support Materials
NFSMI, Education & Training

Mary Gregoire, PhD, RD
Associate Director
NFSMI, Applied Research

Beth King
Coordinator of Clearinghouse
NFSMI, Technology Transfer

Terry Keisler
Education Associate
South Carolina Department of
Education
Columbia, South Carolina

Peggy Lee
Food Service Director
Norfolk, Virginia

Terri Louise Lloyd-Jones
Nutrition Education & Training Coordinator
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Beverly Lowe, RD
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Lighting the Torch

The joy of victory or the agony of defeat—which will it be?

Child Nutrition Programs in some schools are winning over world-class competition. In other schools, the Child Nutrition Program is swamped by the competition.

What does it take to make a winning team?

The Child Nutrition goal is greater participation. To get the Gold for participation, we have to get a team that works together. We need team mates, supporters, boosters, fans!

It takes teamwork to please the fans, to build support. Without fans, any team is out of business. In any business—sports, Child Nutrition, management firms, or fast-food franchises—the name of the game is customer satisfaction.

Recruiting the team

Building support for school lunch participation requires customer service—to the students first, and to the teachers. These are the active players in this game, the customers who eat in the school cafeteria.

If we stop with customers who eat in the school cafeteria, we won't have much of a boosters' club. Coaches realize that

fans turn players into winners. We'll need to recruit school administration and parents and the whole community. The customers who buy our product and the people who influence them are our markets. They are the customers we serve and the customers to whom we must market.

We recruit them through customer service, a technique perhaps new to Child Nutrition, but we must develop these service skills if we want to train a winning team. Times have changed, and we have to play the game to win.

Traditionally, marketing considered product the key to success. That won't work any more. Too many good products are competing for the same market. The customer-focused approach understands that customer service is the key to customer satisfaction, to the Gold for participation.

Once we didn't need marketing skills any more than teachers did, because we were an integral part of the educational system! Make no mistake—we still are part of the educational system! But school food service is also a business—a **big** business! Child Nutrition programs serve 25 million lunches every single school day.



Go for the Gold!

We spend \$5 billion just for food. That's bigger than our biggest competitor.

World class competition

Child Nutrition is big but shrinking. School food service is shrinking because we didn't beat the competition at what they do best: meet the customer's wants and needs. The bottom line in any business is customer satisfaction.

The rules have changed

Once upon a time most of the children in school ate lunch in the school cafeteria. Children came to school and stayed there all day long. In the days of closed campuses and full days of classes, of course most of the children ate in the school cafeteria. They had no choice. Those were the days when children ate what was put before them, at home and at school.

Nowadays kids have choices. Only 56 percent of students eat in the school cafeteria. We lost many of our potential customers.

Who won them away from the school cafeteria? Seven percent skipped lunch. Oh, we know where to place the blame:

- Lines are too long, time is too short.
- Lunch period is too early; children are not hungry yet.
- Eating in the cafeteria is not cool.
- Girls are skipping meals to lose weight.

Almost four students in 10 ate with competitors:

- 18 percent ate from school snack bars, vending machines, school stores, or cafeteria a la carte—lunches that were too low in vitamins, minerals, even calories.
- 8 percent brought lunch from home or went home.
- 4 percent ate off campus.

Yes, we can place blame, or we can win them back. Losers make excuses. Winners overcome.

Losers' excuses:

- Change costs too much.
- Students won't accept change.
- Staff can't do it.

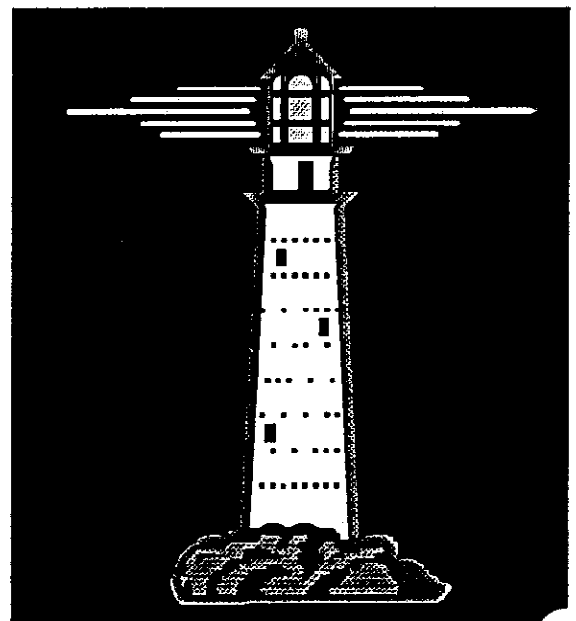
How winners overcome:

- Make small changes, one step at a time.
- Use each boost in participation to take the next step.
- Concentrate on training staff.

We can coach our team to meet our customers' wants and needs. Building good teams takes a good coaching staff who exert strong, positive leadership.

Leadership starts at the top, with the food service director, the supervisor, and the site manager.

.....
**Leadership is
an attitude,
just as cus-
tomer service
is an attitude.**
.....



.....
**Customer
satisfaction
gives school
food service
the
competitive
edge.**
.....

Leadership is an attitude, just as customer service is an attitude.

We can provide customer service better than our competition because we have a built-in advantage. We're there, on site, where the customer is. We have the right price and the best product. With the right attitude, we can win this game.

What it takes to win

Marketing will persuade the customer to buy from us. Boiled down to its bare essentials, these are the four principles of marketing:

Product

Price

Place

Promotion

Product - We already have a good product, but we can always improve. We can give each segment of the market what they want, and use slick marketing to sell what they need—nutritious meals. It's our job to send students to class ready to learn. We not only must serve meals that

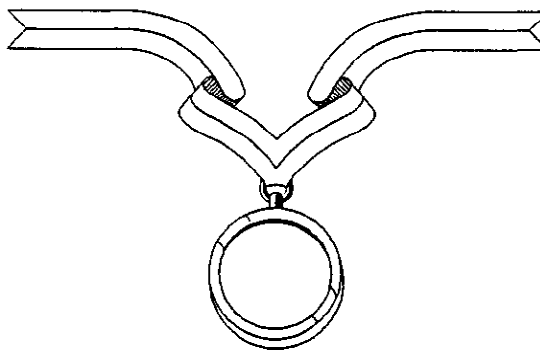
meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, but our customers must participate and enjoy. Repeat business is what we're after.

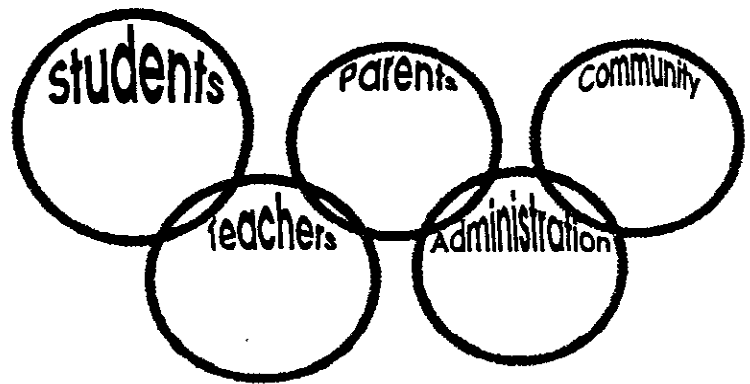
Price - Yes, we already have the best possible price, but who can resist the appeal of extra value? We can market our products with smart price promotions.

Place - Indeed we do already have the most convenient location. If we make it cool, the school cafeteria becomes the "in" place to be at lunchtime.

Promotion - We must make the customer aware of what we offer, convinced that what we have is exactly what he wants and needs. That will take marketing skill and people skill.

Customer satisfaction gives school food service the competitive edge. That's what this Breakfast Lunch Training for School Food Service Managers (BLT) is all about, to show how we win the Gold in participation through customer service.





The Gold Chain

Customers are the Gold links in the marketing chain. The Gold in any business depends on customer satisfaction.

Who are our customers? Those who eat in the cafeteria, yes, but also those who influence them. If we look at five distinct market segments, we can see why and how they influence our success. That is why we must meet the wants and needs not just of those who eat in the cafeteria but of all five market segments:

- Students
- Teachers
- School administrators
- Parents
- Community

Most of our food sales are to students. Students are the primary market, and students influence a secondary market, their parents.

Teachers are students' role models, willingly or not. Teachers who eat a balanced meal in the school cafeteria each day set the

best possible example for the students. Teachers who back our nutrition objectives, understand Child Nutrition regulations, and promote our program are our strongest allies. Teachers are a primary market, and they influence all the other markets, especially students.

When the front office listens and supports Child Nutrition Programs, we've got a head start. The school principal controls lunch schedules and cafeteria space. School administration approves plans and changes in our facilities and service. We need administration among our fans. Administration is a primary market and influences teachers and both secondary markets.

Parents want what's best for their children. Parents who are convinced that school food service is the best can give us the winning edge. Parents influence students, and they influence school administration and the community, as well.



Go for the Gold!

What kind of public image does school food service have? We may as well recognize that Child Nutrition has had some negative publicity. Justified or not, we have to deal with it. Starting from where we are, we build public confidence and—yes, respect. Respect is something we earn. With the community on our side, we can Go for the Gold.

Now let's look at what each of these market segments wants from us and how we can supply the wants and needs of these, our customers. Make no mistake—our success depends on customer satisfaction.

Students **want** fun, a break with their friends. They **want** food that tastes good. That's why kids gather at hangouts where food is served. They want instant gratification, so anything that is fun and appeals both to their tastes and their social natures instantly gratifies their wants.

What students **need** is a varied and balanced lunch that meets at least one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance. They are growing and going, which means they get hungry. If students aren't hungry at mealtime, something is wrong!



Maybe they filled up on empty-calorie food—our competition. We can't meet students' **needs** if they aren't hungry. We have to figure out why they ate the wrong snacks at the wrong time. Maybe they didn't have any breakfast. Maybe they didn't want to stand in line and then have to bolt their meal. Maybe they don't know how good cafeteria food can be. Maybe we need to make some marketing changes so we can satisfy students' **needs**.

Teachers **want** students who come to the classroom ready to learn. Good teachers realize that hungry students can't learn, whether that hunger is from lack of food or from lack of nutrients. Teachers know or need to know that students who have a balanced and nutritious meal pay attention, behave better, learn more, and are more likely to come to class than students who are hungry. That's the kind of students teachers **want**.

What teachers **need** is help teaching good nutrition to their students. They teach theory in the classroom; the cafeteria is the learning laboratory where the theory becomes practice.

The aim of all administrators, from the school principal to the CEO of Fortune 500 companies, is the same. They **want** to succeed. Where would the school be without a viable Child Nutrition Program? Low-income students would go hungry. Students who can pay would be all over town filling up on empty-calorie food. Students would not be ready to learn when they got to class. And

.....
Maybe we need to make some marketing changes so we can satisfy students' needs!
.....



.....
**Media are a
means of
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support of the
whole commu-
nity for Child
Nutrition
Programs**
.....

where would the Child Nutrition Program staff be? Out of a job.

What school administrators **need** is to realize what Child Nutrition Programs contribute to school success. The superintendent and principal who know the value of Child Nutrition are certain to become advocates. Child Nutrition can help them succeed, so administrators are a segment of our market from whom we stand to gain the most.

Parents **want** the same things for their children, whether they work at being good parents or not. Parents really **want** what's best for their children. Marketing makes parents aware that Child Nutrition Programs provide the best for their children.

The majority of today's parents both work for a living. They never seem to have enough time or enough money. They **need** convenient sources of meals, and they **need** good value for their food dollar. Marketing Child

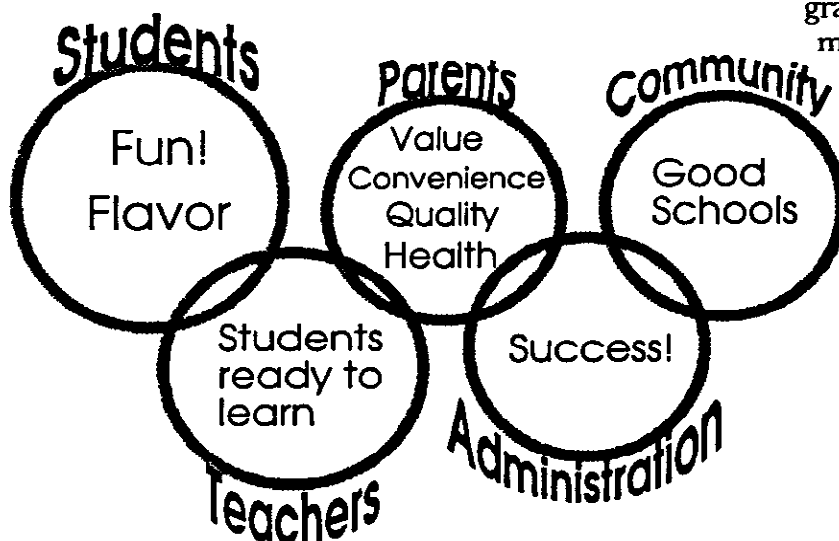
Nutrition Programs to parents shows them that their children can get more of their nutritional needs met at school at less cost than if they ate at home or anywhere else.

Communities **want** good schools. The media are the mouthpiece of the community. The media influence the opinions of community leaders in government and business circles, and express the opinions of the community leaders. Media are businesses, too. They **want** readers and listeners.

To get readers and listeners, media **need** good stories that interest a lot of people. Stories from schools boost media ratings because most residents in any community are families with children in school. Media are a means of garnering support of the whole community for Child Nutrition Programs.

To serve our customers, we look at the wants and needs of all the markets that have a vested interest in Child Nutrition Programs. Then we can develop marketing strategies to satisfy those customer wants and needs.

The graphic summarizes the wants and needs of the five links in the marketing Gold Chain.



Go for the Gold!

Growth potential

Our Child Nutrition Programs have the potential to grow at least 2 percent per year. That's almost as good as the Gross National Product! You see, Child Nutrition really is big business.

Whether the programs grow or not depends on whether the 8.3 percent expected increase in enrollment by the year 2000 becomes our business or whether those students take their business elsewhere. You know what will make the difference? Right, customer service.

Marketing to Students

Fun and games are what kids want. Marketing with contests, games, prizes, celebrations, and celebrities attract customers, who don't want to miss out on the fun. Borrow your most successful competitor's most successful campaigns (being careful not to use any copyrighted slogans or trademarks). The marketing section, beginning on page 9-1, has a lot of ideas on how to stimulate interest in cafeteria fun.

What students need is good nutrition. It has to taste good, too. To market good nutrition, Child Nutrition Programs must serve consistently flavorful food and provide superior customer service. The challenge is to find food that kids love that is good for them. Test panels and tasting parties are good ways to meet that challenge.

Lunch time is crunch time in most schools—time standing in line too long, time to eat too short. Innovative marketing

techniques solve the problem with instant service ideas. Patio dining, food bars, "drive-through" service, sandwich plates or brown bags are some of the solutions. Look around your cafeteria for ways to move things along faster.

Above all else, the kind of friendly, helpful, caring service the customer gets will make the difference in whether that customer wants to eat in the cafeteria or not. None of us can change everything but all of us can change our attitude.

Marketing to Teachers

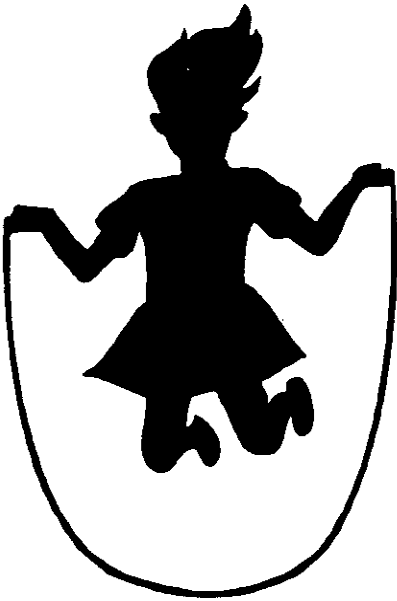
Marketing to teachers makes sure teachers know what we have to offer. Meet with teachers, as a group and individually. Talk to them about the merits of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and what good nutrition can mean in the classroom. Find out if they teach nutrition in health education and what we can do to help their students learn. Cultivate their support.

Offer the school cafeteria as a learning lab for their classes:

- Field trips for health education classes
- Ethnic meals for language and geography classes
- Training tips for coaches and physical education teachers
- Nutrient analysis practice for math classes, calculating calories and fat in meal choices

.....
**None of us can
change every-
thing, but all
of us can
change our
attitude**
.....





Offer the cafeteria for public service:

- Forum for announcements, awards, tryouts
- Gallery for art students' exhibitions
- Location for practicing social skills
- Place to hold special events

Explain to teachers, coaches, and band directors how we can help them with fund raising, banquets, field trips, and award programs. Recruit teachers and coaches as role models; remind them of the enormous influence they have on students, from practicing good nutrition to modeling table manners.

Here are ways actual managers made a major difference for their programs:

Amanda served orange juice and whole-grain muffins to all students on standardized test days. A nutritious snack did make a difference, and she proved her point.

During summer football practice, Lois prepared sample bag meals. She offered them to the coach as a sample of what she could do for athletic trips and field trips. Yes, she got the business. All of it.

Sometimes teachers make unreasonable demands because they don't have the best role models.

Debbie is the supervisor in a district where the teachers demanded free lunch and refused to eat in the cafeteria

when they didn't get it. Their attitude really hurt her participation until Debbie started making the rounds of her cafeterias every noon, conspicuously paying for her own lunch. Her example ended the complaints. When Debbie discussed her experience at a school food service association meeting, her colleagues tried the same approach with the same results.

To market to the faculty, teachers have to know we're here and what we can do to help them do their jobs better. We have to be visible, get out of the kitchen and make ourselves a vital part of the learning environment.

If managers aren't comfortable in that role, supervisors can do the talking while managers develop the skills. Managers who would rather write than talk could consider a welcome letter to go in faculty message boxes when the school year starts. Or perhaps a regular newsletter on the back of menus, especially for faculty, inviting their comments on the Child Nutrition Program.

Marketing to Administration

Leaders who take on administrative responsibility enjoy running things. Making things run right is what administrators do.

Leaders never work alone; they lead others to accomplish goals. School administrators have in common with school food service supervisors the need to lead a strong team dedicated to accomplishment.

.....
To market to faculty, teachers have to know we're here and what we can do to help them do their jobs better.
.....

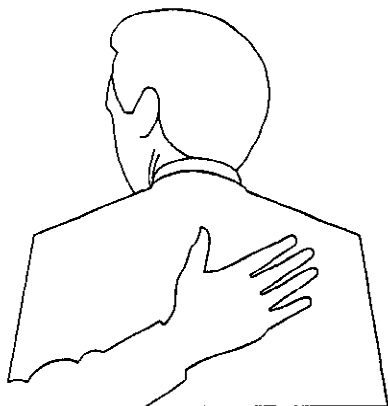
Go for the Gold!

Child Nutrition is part of that administrative team.

While humility comes before honor, it's Child Nutrition Programs time to stop being so modest and Go for the Gold.

The school superintendent and the principal need to know about the Child Nutrition team—what we are doing, what we can do, and what we will do in the future.

Administration needs to know who we are, that we are food service professionals, knowledgeable and accomplished in running big business. They need to know we do more than cook, that we



are a nutrition program, performing a valuable service not only to the school system but to the entire community.

Schools should accommodate the dietary requirements of special needs children, consistent with the Federal Guidelines.

What happens to the academic performance of latchkey kids and children living in homes where there is no nutritious food

available? If they are in after-school care programs, school food service meets their nutritional needs.

Our administrators may be aware of expanding responsibilities in the school system, but they may not have considered the vital role Child Nutrition will take in the future trends, when Child Nutrition isn't just for children anymore. Adult day care and senior feeding programs are becoming the business of the most qualified feeding specialists, the school food service staff.

Administrators also need to know how we can help to make the total education program more successful. When they discover that Child Nutrition Programs can serve superior awards banquets at less cost, suggest incentive events, and even help with fund raising, they will be impressed.

Admittedly Debra had a secret agenda, but her principal didn't need to know that. She was fed up with candy sales in her school for every fund raising, from band uniforms to class trips. Students spent their lunch money on candy and ruined their appetites.

So Debra offered the school cafeteria for "Sunday Lunch," as she called it, to raise money for the coach's athletic program. The athletes and coaches would cook and serve, with volunteer help from Debra's staff. In that small rural community where restaurants are closed on Sunday, the folks flocked to the school to eat.

.....
Administrators also need to know how we can help make the total education program more successful.
.....

.....
Our relationships must be partnerships for mutual benefit.
.....

Sunday Lunch was such a huge success for fund raising and public relations for the Child Nutrition Program that it has become a regular monthly event, with school organizations taking turns as sponsors and beneficiaries.

Put yourself in the superintendent's place to visualize how you could help your program by helping your administrator. This is a person who has a school board to please. The school board has to listen to every petty complaint, every illogical demand, and the superintendent has to respond.

Angie realized that the school board hadn't kept abreast of changes in her Child Nutrition Program and had never even heard of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. She had an idea that could bring them up-to-date. She invited the school board to lunch. She asked them to go through the regular line so they could see her program for themselves. She gave each member a nutritional analysis graph, showing how much of the Daily Values were in the lunch. The invitation was so successful that the school board holds most of their regular meetings in one of Angie's cafeterias.

Administrators who see that we can make their programs more successful will be willing to make our programs more successful. The principal is the only one who can fix our problems with crowded dining rooms and lunchtime schedules. Our relationships must be partnerships for mutual benefit. The principal may be able to give us more space, such as an outdoor picnic area or place for a "drive through" pickup. They may not give us more time, but administration can approve, maybe even suggest ideas to make meal service move faster.

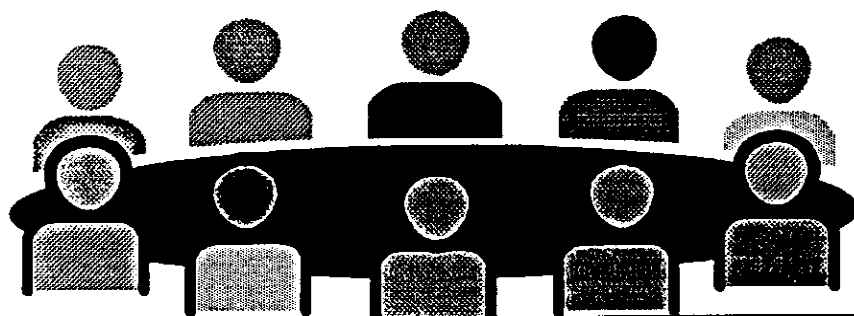
Marketing to Parents

The parents of the '90s are the baby-boomers of the '50s, with distinctly different needs and values than the previous generation of parents.

Many of today's mothers work, and many more are single parents. The nuclear family is breaking up, and the extended family is scattered. Many of today's parents cope with families and jobs by themselves and on one income.

Today's mothers value convenience because they don't have time to cook. They care about value—about cost and quality—because money is tight.

One thing hasn't changed: parents want what is best for their children. They tend to make up for less time to spend with their families by indulging them more. They are not around to supervise their meals, but they want their children to eat right.



Go for the Gold!

This generation of parents is confronted with an abundance of nutritional information. They are at a crossroads, trying to decide what to do with what they hear about the link between diet and disease.

They are panicky about the high cost of health care, but they see sickness as fate or bad luck. They feel powerless to control chronic diseases. It's great news when they learn that Child Nutrition Programs can help control risk, can actually help prevent chronic disease.

Parents want for their children exactly what they get from school food service: convenience, quality, value, and health. Many of today's parents depend on school meals to meet most of their children's dietary requirements. Almost 10 million of these children come from low-income family homes.

Give them this message. Here's what school food service can do for you and your children:

- **Convenience.** Breakfast and lunch are ready, waiting, and complete. Send the kids to school to eat.
- **Value.** You can't get a better meal at a better price anywhere.
- **Quality.** School meals are made fresh, using the finest ingredients available.
- **Nutrition.** School meals are balanced and complete, the best assurance of good health.

Send the message home with students and spread the word through parent groups.

Marketing to Community

Marketing our product to the community builds community support for our program. Government leaders, from the local school board to our Congressional delegation in Washington, provide for our physical and financial needs. Whether it be a local bond issue that enlarges the cafeteria or federal legislation mandating universal school lunch, government action determines our future. We need them, and they need our votes.



School lunch assistance was cut by one-third in the early 1980s. Three million children, including one million low-income children, were forced from the school lunch program. To this day, school lunch participation is still lower than it was 15 years ago, although enrollment has remained constant. We've never made up the ground we lost.

Child Nutrition staff can talk to elected officials. We could invite school board members to lunch.

When a school board votes to drop out of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, all the students in the school, including low-income children, are denied access to Child Nutrition.

Some 200 schools have terminated their participation in the last decade. Their community leadership did not understand, did not know the benefits. Why didn't someone tell them?

Child Nutrition staff can go to school board meetings. While we're there, we could invite the board to lunch, too.

The mouthpiece of the community is the media. Media shape community opinion. Child Nutrition Programs can form one of those partnerships that work with media to benefit both parties. Media need news, and Child Nutrition Programs need good publicity.

Most school districts have one media spokesperson who handles all contacts with the media. The spokesperson is knowledgeable about the needs of the media and is a valuable resource to get our story out to the community. Media contacts can help shape a positive image and work with school food service to present the best possible face to the public.

Most newspapers like to print menus because parents want to read them; menus build readership. We can get our good-nutrition public relations message across with nutrient analysis of each menu, which also boosts the news value to the paper and should promote a better placement in the news section.

Child Nutrition's involvement and service to the community is on a fast track to bigger and better programs. The community, from the school administration to the representatives under the capitol dome, will want to know the programs that are coming to public schools.

Tell them about these programs:

- ◆ after school care
- ◆ special needs children
- ◆ summer feeding
- ◆ child and adult care feeding programs

As school food service becomes a community nutrition center, these programs create jobs and income for the whole community, as well as the specialized nutrition services to the most vulnerable populations. These, too, create big stories for media, as they impact the entire community.

Summer feeding

Who makes sure low-income students have at least one nutritious meal each day when school's out? School food service or other private, nonprofit organizations. The program is open to anyone when the district qualifies.

Senior citizens

By the early 2000s, 35 million people will be age 65 or older, 9 million or more needing some kind of assistance. Three different federal laws authorize and fund nutrition programs for the elderly.

Go for the Gold!

School food service, with trained staff and facilities, has the inside track to capitalize on the opportunity to serve the nutritional needs of this burgeoning population.



Child and adult care feeding programs

More than 60 percent of the mothers of small children work outside the home. Working mothers need services not only for

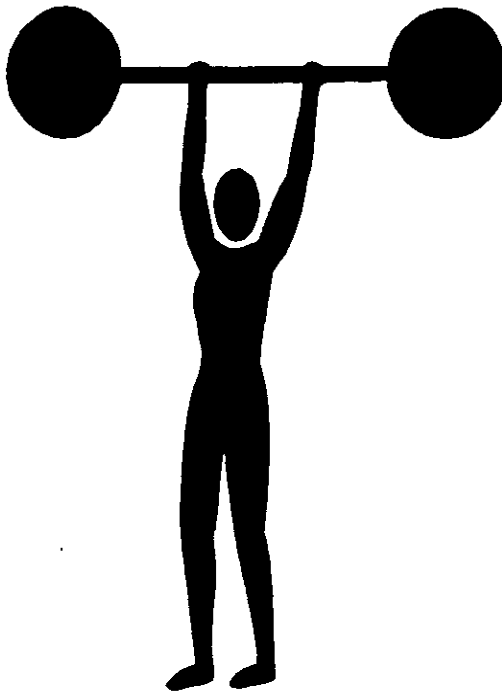
their children but also for parents who cannot provide for themselves. Schools can sponsor day care homes, which provide food and care for five or fewer dependents. The Child and Adult Care Food Program subsidizes some 3 million children in day care and after school care and continues to grow.

Betty is the director of a large urban school district. With an efficient central kitchen capable of producing more than enough for all the schools in the district, she generates income for the community, serving pre-plated meals to 62 other sites. Moreover, she assures meals that are balanced and nutritious for the children in the private schools, day care centers, and recreational sites she serves.

The Gold Chain

Customer service comes first. Child Nutrition Programs can and should serve varied customer needs in a wide array of market segments. Meeting these varied wants and needs makes Child Nutrition Programs indispensable in every community.

.....
Child Nutrition Programs can and should serve varied customer needs in a wide array of market segments
.....



Taste of Victory

Visualize yourself winning the Gold. Visualize growing participation and cooperative teachers. See yourself dealing with happy principals and supportive parents. Visualize community leaders becoming advocates for Child Nutrition.

Concentrate on winning.
Taste the victory. Go for the Gold!

Every journey toward the goal begins with the first step: improving customer service. We don't need money for market research because a major competitor, the restaurant industry, has done the market research for us.

The restaurant industry found out that most of the problems in the industry are people problems. Seventy percent of the complaints generated in food service surveys, year after year, boil down to service problems. Moreover, half of all compliments

zeroed in on service, too. These are the biggies:

- ✓ Quality of service
- ✓ Attitude of staff

Take comfort; some of the industry's problems don't apply to schools. Parking problems and price of drinks are two of the top four restaurant complaints.

But schools do have to cope with traffic in the cafeteria, congestion, space in the cafeteria, and hours of operation, just as restaurants do. We can adopt some of the industry's innovative solutions to their worst nightmares and ours.

We don't need more money to implement customer service because people skills don't cost, they pay. A smile, for example, is free, and it doesn't cost anything to be nice.



Go for the Gold!

Restaurants generate compliments on cleanliness and neatness of the establishment and employee appearance. We know how to beat them at that game.

School food service factors into the customer service equation one major consideration that the restaurant industry is only just beginning to consider. That's nutrition. Child Nutrition Programs are dedicated to meeting the standards of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by the year 2000.

When we talk about marketing, we stress meeting the customers' wants and needs. Nutrition looms much larger among our customers' needs than ever before. As we discuss customer service, nutrition will always be in the forefront of our efforts.

To decide where to start, let's go to lunch with one of our customers, a 10-year-old named Brian.

Brian is supposed to have lunch at 10:40 a.m. but his teacher is held up disciplining one of the other students. Finally she tells the class to go on without her. Brian gets in line at 10:45, behind another class that got there first.

The food looks fresh and appetizing, but Brian doesn't have time to wait. He goes to the hamburger grill, along with most of the other kids in his class. The cook dumps some fries on the plate, along with the burgers already in the buns and lines the plates up on the counter without looking up.

Brian likes "trimmings" but there is no time to get the cook's attention. He settles for several packages of mustard and catsup, gets a box of milk, and moves to a table.

He opens the burger to dress it but finds that the bun is stuck to the meat. Brian takes a bite of the plain burger but decides he isn't hungry enough to eat any more.

He picks up the milk carton. Shucks, it's whole milk! He's used to one percent that they have at home. His mom and teacher both say one percent is better for you. Well, if they had any he missed it.

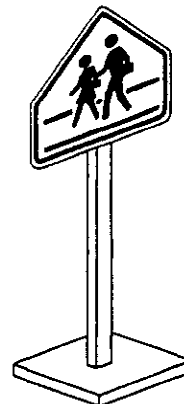
Brian dumps catsup on his fries, gobbles down the whole serving and heads back to his classroom. His teacher is still there, eating a package of cookies from the vending machine.

Brian is starving when he gets home. He finds a lasagna casserole in the fridge and eats half of it. When his mother gets home from work, she has half a fit: "That's what I made for supper," she complains. "How could you eat that lasagna? It wasn't even baked yet."

"It was okay," Brian defends himself. But when supper is ready, Brian won't eat the baked lasagna, nor the salad and garlic bread. He isn't hungry.

Brian's mother is furious. She complains bitterly to her friend, "Brian does this all the time. He comes home from

.....
Child Nutrition Programs are dedicated to meeting the Dietary Guidelines by the year 2000.
.....



.....
The cafeteria manager knows...that concerned, involved parents are our strongest allies.
.....

school so hungry that he eats what I planned for supper and then he won't eat a balanced meal when it is ready. I swear, I'm going to quit sending lunch money. Don't they give those kids anything to eat in the school cafeteria? Doesn't anybody see to it that they eat lunch?"

When Brian goes back to the classroom after lunch, he is not ready to learn. He is unhappy and malnourished. His teacher is cross and malnourished. His mother is furious and unsupportive. She complains to everyone that school food service is a disaster.

Crowded facilities and short lunch periods are not our fault. Teachers who are poor role models, unsupportive parents and communities may have their reasons. But the buck stops short of the legislature, the superintendent, and the principal. The buck stops at the cafeteria manager's desk.



If that is where the blame ends up, that has to be where solutions begin. Elsie, the site manager, gets a visit from Brian's

teacher. She gets a call from Brian's mother. She hears from the principal, who has heard from the teacher, who has heard from the mother.

Elsie is pleased that they have complained. The cafeteria manager knows, as well as do the principal and teacher, that concerned involved parents are our strongest allies. Now she has some leverage to make some changes.

Elsie starts with the principal, asking how he would give the students more time to eat. She asks the teacher if she could accompany the class to observe and suggest improvements. She asks Brian's mother to support a bond issue for the school.

Elsie meets with her staff. She makes a deal: "If the principal and the teachers and the parents are going to do all they can to make things better," she says, "let's take a look at what we're doing and what those fast-food franchises do. Maybe we can use their marketing skills."

The staff comes back with ideas. Some schemes may mean more work, but Elsie has been generating a positive attitude. Cooks offer to make pre-plated cold sandwich and salad plates. They suggest self-serve food bars and food courts. Patio eating with curb-side carts and brown-bag lunches should be popular. They discuss stand-up tables so more students can get into the cafeteria at the same time.

The grill cook promises not to put the hamburger in the bun until the customer orders it.

Go for the Gold!

"Next," Elsie promises herself, "I'll work on getting him to make eye contact with the customer. We all need to make the customer feel pampered and appreciated."

Elsie directs her staff's attention to their nutrition mission. "We're talking about our customers' wants," she says. "As important as that is, we must meet their needs, too, their nutritional needs." She keeps before her staff the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* goals. She points out that two changes generally can lower the fat in meals to the recommended 30 percent of calories from fat—switching from whole milk to skim, and low-fat salad dressings.

"Yes, but we have to serve whole milk," the staff says.

"We don't have to put it in front," Elsie answers. "We can hide it in back." She cautions her staff to make changes gradually. Market two percent milk up front this year, then push one percent milk and finally put the skim milk where most of the students will see it first.

Elsie gets her staff's cooperation by giving them a clear picture of the problem. The staff comes up with ideas on what they can do to change. Elsie tells them how she will assess improvements and stay on top of future snags in customer service. She will follow one of the customers through the line, like this:

Ami, a 15-year-old cheerleader, heads for the "school cafeteria" at lunch time because that's where her friends gather. She gets her meals free

but she decides to skip lunch because she is too busy, and it takes too long. Besides, she feels that the cashier handles the free tickets differently, and she'd rather not eat than for anyone to know. Anyway, she's trying to stay thin for the class beauty contest.

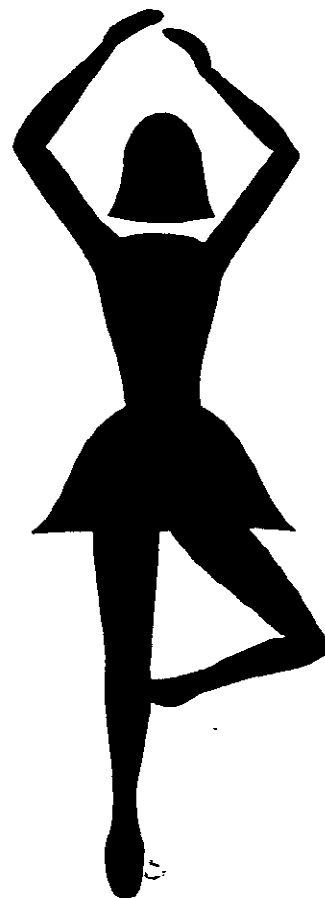
Before cheerleading practice Ami gets so hungry that she just has to get a candy bar and a soft drink from the vending machine. She shouldn't spend the money she needs for her uniform, but she can't stand it. She'll just have to ask her mother or her brother to help her with the clothes.

Elsie hears students talk about "the cafeteria," just a generic term. She realizes that all commercial restaurants have their very own identity. They have a name.

Maybe she could call the school cafeteria "Kids Cafe." Better yet, how about a student contest? The students could come up with their own name, and it would become their hangout.

Elsie decides something must be done about the cashier. He keeps the line from moving. The kids get impatient and embarrassed.

Elsie considers her options: she could replace the cashier with someone faster, but she's worried about staff morale. A computer



.....
**We all need to
make the
customer feel
pampered and
appreciated.**
.....

system would be ideal, but it costs too much. Come to think of it, with more participation, she can easily afford it.

These teenage girls who think they have to look like Barbie dolls dismay Elsie, and her food assistants fuss at them to eat more. That doesn't work, so Elsie looks for a better way. She recalls what the commercial restaurants do—they offer a "diet" selection, a "light" meal that usually isn't.

.....stop.....

**Everybody who
works in Child
Nutrition needs
the spirit of
service.**

.....

Elsie can win at that game because she can make her light plate two ways better:

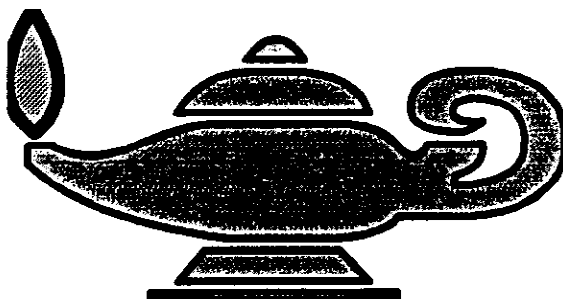
- ♦ really low-calorie light
- ♦ balanced and nutritionally complete

If she publishes the light menu and promotes the new service, she'll have all the teenage girls!

When Elsie can make sure that the low-income students get a nutritious free meal without embarrassment, when she can provide for students with special needs, and when she can equip her staff with satisfactory solutions, she gets a Gold in customer service.

The Spirit of Service

Service is an attitude.



Superior service communicates to the customer:

- ♦ I'm here to help you.
- ♦ I know how to do my job.
- ♦ What else can I do for you?

Put yourself in the place of the customer. Think about when you go out for a meal. Which of the following servers would you prefer?

A server who is efficient, speedy, and keeps correct records?

A server who is friendly, attentive, and knowledgeable?

As employers, we like staff who are fast, efficient, and accurate. As customers we prefer a friendly, attentive, knowledgeable server. With careful management, Child Nutrition Programs can have the best of both worlds. Good managers put the most efficient staff in the jobs best suited for them, and those with the best people skills where they have the most customer contact. Meanwhile, the manager helps all staff to improve the skills they have and learn the skills they need.

Everybody who works in Child Nutrition needs the spirit of service. That spirit starts at the top and moves through the entire staff. Staff who are energetic and enthusiastic, who respect the customer and respond to needs build participation because they satisfy the customer. More than likely they have a supervisor who shows them how by example and by coaching.

Go for the Gold!

Staff that has a real understanding of the Child Nutrition Program and a true belief that healthy foods will make a lifelong difference to every child is equipped to meet the customer's wants and needs by—

- ♦ Serving appealing meals in pleasant surroundings by compassionate people
- ♦ Offering and encouraging healthy food choices
- ♦ Promoting good food habits for a lifetime
- ♦ Positioning Child Nutrition Programs as an integral part of health education programs

The restaurant industry has statistics to back up the belief that service is the most important single factor to customer satisfaction. Child Nutrition Programs, on the other hand, don't actually know what our customers are thinking. We've emphasized following regulations and keeping records, rather than serving the customer.

We could find out what our customers want. Child Nutrition professionals who develop a real understanding of customer service and start using smart marketing strategies quickly learn what works, what the customers enjoy. They find out how to become competitive in the business of serving food.

Becoming competitive, satisfying the customer, going for the Gold in customer service—these concepts may sound strange. These concepts represent change

in Child Nutrition Programs. Change is threatening because change alters the usual way of doing things. The staff says, "But that's not the way we've always done it."

For change to happen, somebody has to lead the way. To deal with change the leader carefully plans each move in advance. Big moves that force change are sure to meet resistance. The leader who succeeds makes small changes and waits until the change is accepted before moving forward.

Thus, the leader starts the Gold Chain that leads to victory. The leader's enthusiasm motivates staff → Motivated staff seek to satisfy customers → Satisfied customers assure participation. Now we're forging the chain that meets customers' wants and their need for better nutrition.

A leader creates the right atmosphere for others to follow. A leader has the right attitude. The one thing we can change, with no increase in time or space or budget, is attitude. The one thing that will bring real and significant change to Child Nutrition is the right attitude.

In one survey of 200 corporations, more than half of the managers said customer satisfaction was their first priority. Yet three out of four of those same managers said price competition was the way to survive. With such mixed priorities, managers have a hard time keeping their focus and keeping their customers. Maybe the first step to change is to rate priorities.



.....
**The leader who
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forward.**
.....

Rate your commitment to continuing improvement

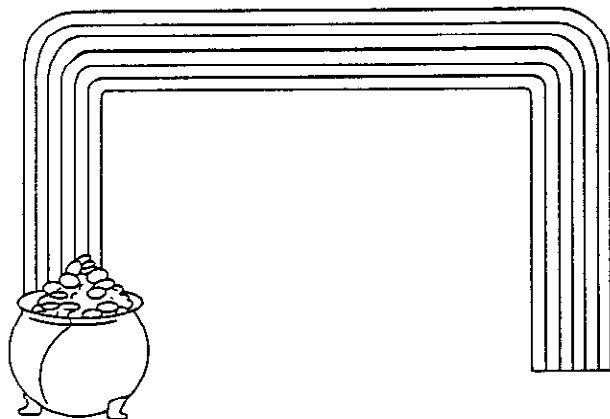
On a scale of 1 to 5:

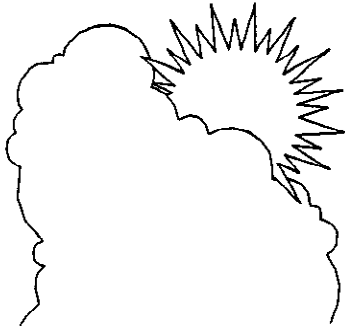
- 1 = unwavering commitment
- 2 = diligent most of the time
- 3 = casual about it
- 4 = only when the mood strikes
- 5 = not at all committed

- ___ 1. Helping others
- ___ 2. Staying under budget
- ___ 3. Customer satisfaction
- ___ 4. Meeting students' nutritional needs
- ___ 5. Keeping accurate count
- ___ 6. Approval of parents
- ___ 7. Staff professional growth
- ___ 8. Administration approval
- ___ 9. Participation
- ___ 10. Avoiding complaints
- ___ 11. Staying on schedule
- ___ 12. Accurate inventory
- ___ 13. Staff approval
- ___ 14. Menus that meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- ___ 15. Constantly improving menus

Look over your rankings and think about your commitments. What changes are important to you? Decide if the changes that are high priority with you are the ones that are really important to your customers and to the Child Nutrition Program.

When you are sure you have your priorities right, you know where to make changes.





Moments of Truth

When a customer complains, be grateful. Say thank you.

Then deal with the complaint promptly. A complaint gives us a second chance to provide service and satisfaction. And the complainer is a valuable resource, someone who can advise us how to deal with the problem. The student or teacher who complains is the customer who buys the service we offer. We need to know customers' viewpoint.

The complaint may not always be justified, but the point is to keep the customers happy so they want to come back. If we make excuses, get defensive, start an argument, we lose a customer. Participation is the name of the game, remember.

A progression of steps we can take to move from complaint to happy resolution of the problem goes along like this:

1. Apologize for the problem.

2. Ask for more information. Listen. Get all the facts.
3. Restate the concern to be sure of the facts.
4. Ask how the customer would fix the problem.
5. Restate what the customer has suggested and request participation in implementing the change, if appropriate.
6. Express appreciation.

It really does work, as Sharon discovered:

Miss Smythe complains to the manager about dirty tables when she brings her class to the cafeteria. "I can't expect my class to eat in filth," the teacher says.

Sharon deflates her anger with agreement, as she restates the problem.



Go for the Gold!

"Yes, I'm sorry the tables are dirty. The class just leaving left the tables like that. It is disgusting. How could we solve this problem?"

"Have your staff clean up before I get here," Miss Smythe demands.

"You want my staff to clean up," Sharon repeats, "but if they stop serving to clean, who will serve your class? Your children are being served before the other class is gone, leaving their trash behind."

"I don't see why they have to leave such a mess," Miss Smythe says. "I don't allow my children to act like that." She has suggested a solution to which she is, therefore, already committed.

"Ah, that's a good idea," Sharon says. "Wouldn't it be a good thing if all the classes adopted your rules? Will you work it out with the other teachers? And thank you so much for bringing this to my attention and for your suggestion."

A complaint is the Moment of Truth when we find out how we really are doing. Customers who complain care enough to tell us what's happening. They take the time and go to the trouble to help us do a better job of serving the customer.

Customer satisfaction is our job. To improve continually, we need a steady flow of feedback from our customers.

Unsolicited complaints and compliments are the best kind because they come from customers who noticed!

We also need an organized system of feedback to be sure we know what all of our customers are thinking all the time. Generating customer comments reminds employees that customers really do have the last word. It sends the message to staff that customers do have a voice in the kind of service they expect to receive.

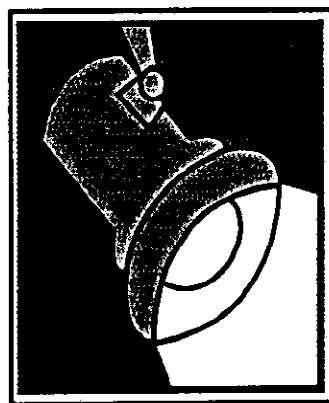
First we must make a commitment to ourselves and to the customer to take a positive approach to feedback, criticism as well as praise. That means we listen, really listen to what the customer is telling us. We act on the customer comments, and make sure those who take time to comment can see the results.

Three organized feedback systems supply us with input on which we can improve our service to customers:

- Service audit
- Employee feedback
- Customer feedback

Service Audit

The service audit starts with a management style called MBWA, "management by walking around." That means that the boss gets out of isolation, away from the desk and out where the action is. The cafeteria manager walks around the kitchen, the serving line, the dining area, the dish room.



.....
**A complaint
gives us a
second chance
to provide
service and
satisfaction.**
.....



MBWA can be threatening to staff who aren't used to seeing the boss in their work area. The manager who often walks around, who has a positive attitude, who appears as an advocate and helper will soon put the staff at ease. Staff sees such a manager as accessible—a knowledgeable supporter.

Meanwhile, the manager stays informed. From MBWA eventually should evolve a service audit form, based on a rating scale. Such a management tool is helpful for personnel appraisal, as well as providing the manager with a continuous check on customer service.

Employee feedback

The manager who manages by walking around will develop rapport, so that staff becomes comfortable with sharing information about customer service. The management style that gets the best feedback is participatory management. Ask employees for their ideas on improving service. Ask about the problems they face serving customers and how they'd fix it.

These are the critical factors to the employee feedback system:

.....
The management style that gets the best feedback is participatory management.
.....

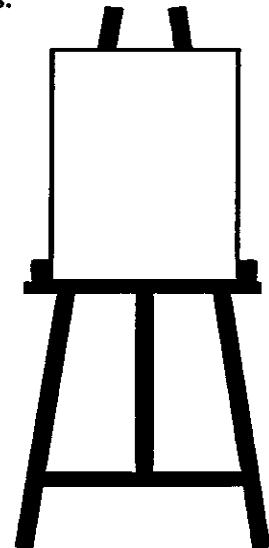
- Give-and-take ideas between managers and staff
- Focus on service behavior
- Share information
- Develop solutions with staff
- Implement changes

Employees, who are in regular, daily contact with the

customers, know their service preferences, which can change from day to day. We need immediate responses from these listening posts, who must feel no reluctance to tell about problems in confidence that the information they share is heard and used.

Be sure to acknowledge and reward employees for passing along comments and ideas; otherwise the flow of information may slow or stop. An employee award for the best suggestion of the month (to improve service) is an example of a way to encourage input.

Busy staff also must have a fast and convenient method of sharing information. If they wait until the shift is over, they'll forget. A chalk board or flip chart where employees can jot down comments and ideas quickly will stimulate the flow of information. Encourage them to write down their thoughts immediately. Then go over the comments with the staff daily, and ask them for suggestions and resolutions.



Go for the Gold!

The hard part with feedback from any source is being open to the answers we hear. We must listen without becoming defensive or giving all the "reasons" why things aren't the way customers or staff would like them to be. We must be willing to act on what people tell us.

Customer feedback

Most unhappy customers don't complain; they just quit coming. To Go for the Gold in participation, we need more than response to complaints. We need a proactive method of soliciting information to find out what customers think about our service.

Whether we get the information we seek depends on two things:

- ♦ If it is easy for the customer to share information with us.
- ♦ What we do with the information we get.

Three different assessment tools, adaptable to different situations, give a fair assessment of customer opinion:

- ♦ Individual informal interviews
- ♦ Focus groups
- ♦ Questionnaire/surveys

Interviews

Get out on the floor and personally talk with customers. Show them we are honestly interested in serving them and

hearing what they have to say, the good with the bad. Spending a little time with the students and teachers is a learning experience!

Individual interviews can become a regular part of the director's, supervisor's, and manager's daily routine to keep tabs on how things are going. Open-ended questions, questions that require an answer rather than just a "yes" or "no," yield the most information:

What did you like best about lunch today?

What did you like least?

What did you think of the (new product) we served today?

Where do you usually eat lunch? Why?

How many different foods do you usually get for lunch? Why?

How do you decide what you want for lunch?

What foods do you think you should eat more often?

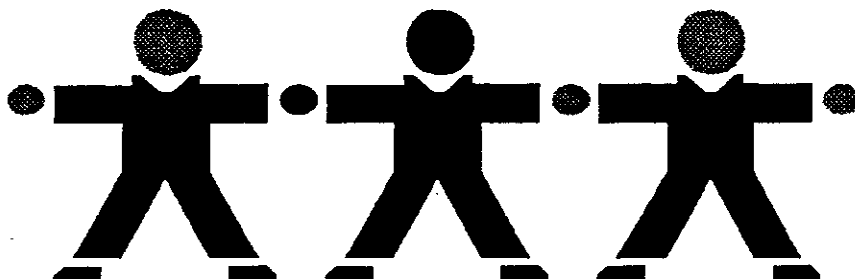
What foods, if any, do you try to avoid? Why?

What do you have to eat when you get home from school?

What do you usually have for breakfast?

How long did you wait in line?

.....
Most unhappy customers don't complain; they just quit coming.
.....





Some of the same questions are appropriate to ask parents about their children. A good way to interview parents is by telephone. Telephone interviews are inexpensive and don't take much time.

Supervisors may need to train managers in the techniques of telephone interviews, and then ask each manager in a district to conduct a certain number of interviews each month.

If we ask for information, we have an obligation to accept complaints with the same positive attitude as compliments. Remember to thank the critic for being willing to share with us the problems and be sure to ask what that customer would do to fix it.

Being there when the teacher or student leaves usually elicits more and better information than interviewing when the customers come in or during their meal. Remembering customers' names breaks down barriers and is one of the most productive ways of getting customer feedback.

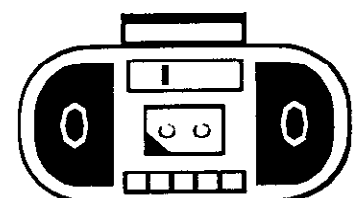
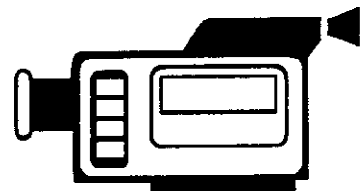
Focus groups

A focus group is a small, informal gathering of representatives from a target group of customers. Focus groups gather information quickly and at little cost. We can use focus groups to discover customer attitudes about schedules, new policies, and promotional campaigns. Focus groups are helpful to follow up on surveys and comment cards, too.

Invite 10 or 12 customers for about an hour to an hour-and-a-half of informal conversation about our service, what they like or don't like. The customers should all be from the same market segment so that they are comfortable talking to each other: student leaders, teachers representing different grades, parents who are aware and involved in their children's education.

Ideally, the focus group leader will have some experience or training. The leader prepares a list of open-ended questions to get the discussion started and then lets the conversation follow in any direction that produces useful information. The leader keeps the discussion on course with more questions as needed. Above all, the leader respects opinions expressed by everyone in the group.

With the focus group's permission, record the session on video or audio tape. Focus groups are helpful feedback tools, but results are not to be considered scientifically significant.



.....
If we ask for information, we have an obligation to accept complaints with the same positive attitude as compliments.
.....

Go for the Gold!

Questionnaires and surveys

We can generate comments from customers through surveys, comment cards, or a comment section on the backs of menus. A phone number printed on the menu inspires busy customers to make a quick response.

Intake could be a recorder or voice mail, which also gives the Child Nutrition Program a golden opportunity to deliver a positive nutrition message to the caller.

Comment cards must be available where customers can easily access them, with collection sites just as easily accessible. Whatever the source of comments, we should acknowledge them promptly, respond rapidly, and call attention to the improved customer service that was the result.

A survey is used to measure customer satisfaction and also can help with quality control. The sample size need not be large, and the data is acceptable if the sample is selected at random; i.e., everyone in the group had an equal chance of being selected.

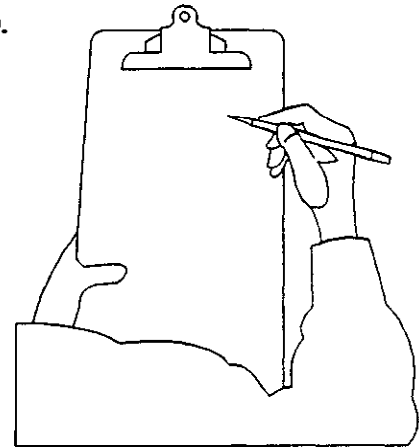
Questionnaires usually have three sections:

1. An introduction to explain the purpose of the survey
2. The main question section
3. Concluding section that includes demographic information

A sample introduction might say:

The Child Nutrition Program at (your) school is dedicated to providing the best possible school food service. We want to know how we are doing and how we can do better. Please take a few moments to fill out the questionnaire and return it to (include location or address).

The main section should be short, fewer than 20 questions, arranged so the respondent can circle an answer or fill in a number. To evaluate results, we need a numerical score for each answer. Below are a few examples of how the questions in the main section might be written:



Rate each of the following from good to bad on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the best.

The application process ____

Waiting time in the cafeteria line ____

The service from serving staff ____

The price of lunch compared to competitors ____

The nutrition content of the menu ____

Circle the appropriate answer:

*Where would you rather eat:
inside cafeteria patio class-
room home off campus*

.....
97.5% of
parents
agreed...
"Good nutri-
tion is part of
learning and
deserves
promotion in
the class-
room"

*Which of the following would
 most improve the cafeteria?
 paint decoration music
 trays/dishes furniture*

*Rate the following on a scale of 1 to
 5 in order of importance, 5 being the
 most important:*

*The meal: flavor___ nutrition
 ___ price___ appearance
 ___ choices ___*

*The server: helpful___ speedy
 ___ friendly___ courteous ___
 knowledgeable ___*

*Add your own comments about the
 food, service, or staff:*

In the final survey section,
 we need to find out about the
 person who wrote the answers
 while preserving the anonymity
 of the responder. For example:

*Please fill in the following informa-
 tion:*

*Grade in school _____ Age _____ Boy
 or girl? _____*

Some of the comments
 from surveys are useful, some are
 funny. Here are some comments
 from a sample of parents and
 sixth to twelfth graders in the
 Portland Public Schools:

*"The food is OK, but I
 wish we had more than one
 choice for a main dish." - Sixth
 grader*

*"My favorite meals are
 tacos, pizza, and the salad bar.
 I wish they had more things to
 put on the salad." - Eleventh
 grader.*

*"Who makes the deci-
 sion to buy a school lunch?
 Why, my kid, of course." -
 Parent*

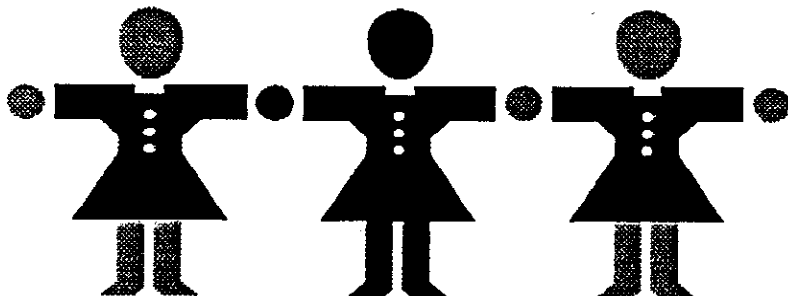
*"You have got to be
 kidding. What I say goes. If I
 want my kid to eat at school,
 then he'll eat at school." -
 Parent*

One of the most interesting
 points from the Portland study:
 97.5 percent of parents surveyed
 agreed with this statement:
 "Good nutrition is part of learn-
 ing and deserves promotion in
 the classroom."

We could all use sound
 data, the kind we can get from a
 random survey, to verify and
 support our position when we
 approach school administration
 for changes that improve our
 Child Nutrition Programs.

Task priorities

Sometimes we learn from
 surveys things we wish were not
 so but we need to know to fix.
 An example is the National Food
 Service Management Institute
 survey that asked managers and
 supervisors to rate 124 tasks
 from "most" to "least" important.



Go for the Gold!

The task that got the lowest rating was, "Visits classrooms and promotes and arranges tasting parties and kitchen field trips for students." The primary objective of taste testing is to find out what kids like. Tasting panels and parties are a proven method of looking at products, and these parties foster good public relations, as well as measurable results. Tasting parties help managers evaluate new products and determine which ones to put on a food product bid. Results can justify decisions to bid one product over a rival brand.

Of the 124 tasks listed, these were rated the least important:

"Trains school food service personnel to merchandise the school lunch program."

"Promotes student, staff, and community support for the school food service program."

"Develops a marketing strategy for the school food service program based on input from students, parents, and school staff."

"Knows the importance of special functions as a positive public relations tool."

"Promotes a positive image of school food service by preparing and serving meals for special functions and community activities."

"Seeks students and parental involvement in activities such as menu planning."

These findings indicate that we need to rethink our priorities relevant to marketing and cus-

tomers service. These things are basic to customer service in Child Nutrition Programs!

Self study

One tool that equips employees to rate themselves is a customer relations potential scale. Adults need to know how they are doing, and a rating scale provides them with an opportunity to find out, to make a private assessment and to make adjustments on their own.

Here is a way to develop such a scale: Have the staff list personal qualities they believe are most important to success in personal and public relations. Select the 10 most important qualities, have the list printed so that every staff member can have a copy. Ask them to go over the list at least once at the beginning of the school year and halfway through.

These are some of the qualities we can suggest to get the list started:

I control my moods most of the time.

I can be pleasant to people who are not pleasant to me.

I like most people.

I enjoy providing service to customers.

I apologize for problems instead of making excuses.

I take pride in my work.

When a customer service employee fails, attitude is usually the reason. Nothing succeeds like a successful attitude.

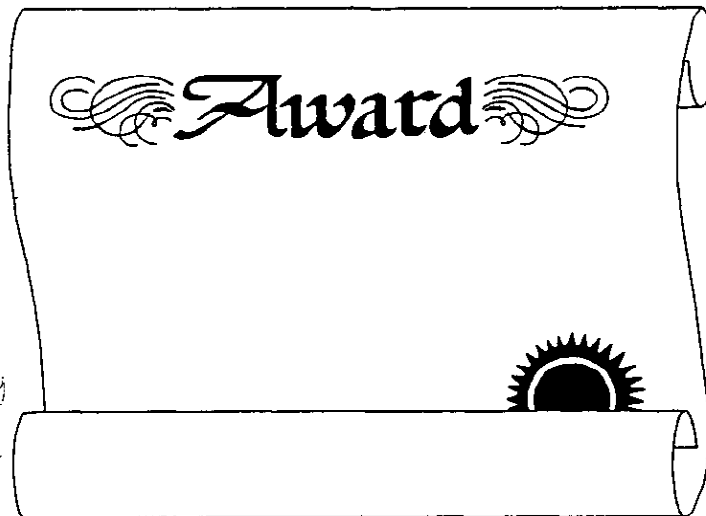
.....
When a customer service employee fails, attitude is usually the reason.
.....

.....
Service employees are like mirrors—we get back what we give out.
.....

Service employees are like mirrors—we get back what we give out. The attitude we project depends on how we feel about ourselves and our job. Attitude is a state of mind that comes from feelings and thoughts. And we

never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

Employees who have a positive, helpful, friendly attitude are employees who succeed, who win the Gold for customer service.



Walking the Course

Treat the customer as we would like to be treated—of course that should assure success, but how do we know how our customers want to be treated?

We can get the picture by actually walking in their shoes. Stand in line and feel the frustration. Look at the dining room decor. See how the food looks and smells. Know the uncertainty of making choices. Get upset when they run out. Resent the need to hurry.

Try it again for the first time. Experience all the feelings the school food service customer feels. These are the **Moments of Truth**, the customer contact points.

- ✓ Start with the first contact point, the menu. How does it look to the customer? Would we be eager to participate?
- ✓ Walk through the application process. How does it feel to be low-income, applying for free meals?

Does everyone know, can they tell?

- ✓ Go through the line. Are the employees helpful? Do they make us feel good? Are we glad we came?
- ✓ Look at the arrangement and appearance of the food on the line.
- ✓ Eat the meal. Return the tray.

Go back to the office and evaluate the whole experience, moment by moment. Am I a satisfied customer? Would I want to go back?

Would I want to participate in school lunch if I were full pay? How about if I were free or reduced? How does this experience compare to the fast-food competitor? Would I rather bring lunch from home?

The employee who goes through the complete cycle of service, physically or mentally, can begin to think about the customer's wants and needs, about customer satisfaction.



Go for the Gold!

Making a T-chart is one way for each employee to analyze where and how to make improvements.

The T-Chart

Task Action	Personal Action
Explain procedures	Greet customer
Fill out forms	Make conversation
Serve vegetables	Offer choices

In the left column the employee lists the specific tasks. On the right side the employee suggests special personal things to say and do that make the customer comfortable. These actions would include greetings, making conversation, being pleasant and helpful, suggesting healthy choices.

Once we have identified each Moment of Truth that we need to improve, these are the logical steps to make it happen:

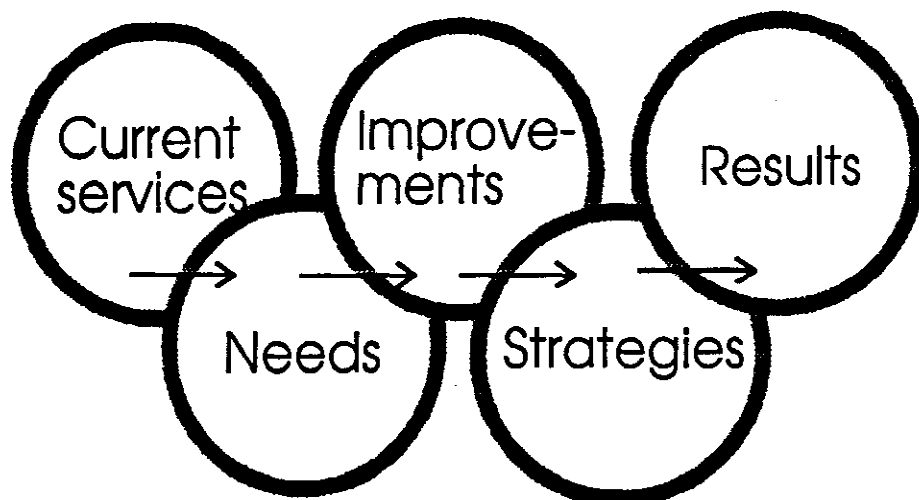
- ♦ Define the ideal, what we need to do to provide service as we really want it to be.
- ♦ Develop improvement strategies, a logical sequence taken in small steps.
- ♦ Evaluate results.

In our business, customer satisfaction means students enjoying healthy foods in a happy environment. The two dimensions to that kind of service are the procedural and personal. To understand both dimensions, let's go to lunch with Becky.

Becky's teacher goes over the menu with the class before they go to the cafeteria. They talk about which foods are low-fat and discuss the merits of "whole grain."

The cafeteria staff batch cooks and puts out fresh food just in time for Becky's class.

.....
In our business, customer satisfaction means students enjoying healthy foods in a happy environment.



.....
The cashier keeps a tray filled with glasses of ice water in case a customer wants a glass of water.
.....

Becky knows exactly what she will choose. She adds a roll when the server suggests that she might enjoy one, fresh from the oven.

The skim milk is where Becky can reach it, and she has a choice between an orange or an apple. The cashier keeps a tray filled with glasses of ice water in case a customer wants a glass of water.

When Becky returns her tray to the dish room, the manager greets her by name and asks her what she liked best about lunch. Becky hesitates to say she would rather have had a whole-wheat roll, but the manager seems pleased to hear it. She tells Becky she is right, whole-wheat is better, and she will

make sure the cafeteria doesn't run out next time.

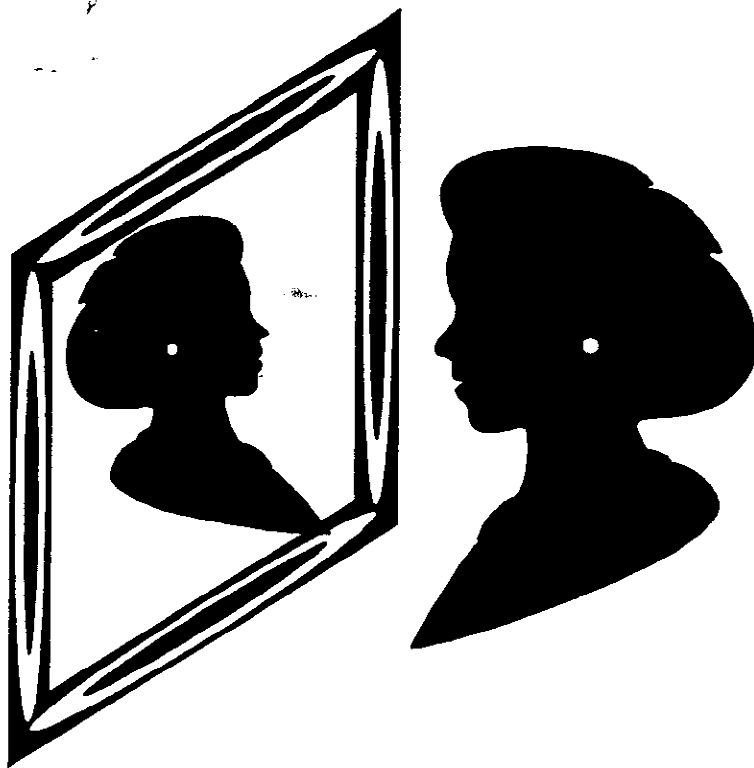
Look for the procedural dimension in the above example:

- On time, prompt and efficient service
- Convenient for the customer
- Organized to anticipate wants and needs
- Customer feedback welcomed
- Problems analyzed and solved
- Continuously monitored

Check the personal dimension:

- ◆ Positive attitude toward customer service
- ◆ Sensitive to customer welfare
- ◆ Pleasing body language
- ◆ Friendly, helpful service
- ◆ Mastery of selling skills

Becky's cafeteria makes it look easy because it is. Going for the Gold in customer service is possible for every school food service operation. We can do it, too.



Leaders and Followers

We choose leaders. We train managers. Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things right.

Management can be taught. Leadership is instinctive.

There are leaders who are not managers and managers who are not leaders. Good management without effective leadership is like baking a perfect cake for a party to which no one came.

At the top level of management, it comes together. The best managers are leaders.

Leaders are born, not made, but managers can whet their leadership skills, and leaders can learn to become good managers.

Leaders go to the front. Everybody else follows. The only way we can define a leader is as someone who has followers.

We follow leaders because they know where they are going.

Leaders take risks.

They are innovators.

Leaders are persistent.

They are disciplined.

Leaders are communicators.

They are competitive.



Go for the Gold!

Leaders are fair.

They are trustworthy and trusting.

Leaders inspire followers to go wherever they lead.

We follow people who are predictable, whose positions are known, and who keep working toward their goals. This relentless dedication earns our trust.

As Calvin Coolidge said:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

"Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent.

"Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

"Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

"Persistence, determination alone are omnipotent."

We can judge leaders by their followers. If followers didn't trust their leaders, they'd quit following.

We follow leaders not so much for who they are as for how they make us feel. We do what managers tell us to do because they are authority figures, but we follow leaders because they make us feel good about ourselves.

When we feel good about ourselves and our jobs, we achieve more, especially in service to our customers. Leadership in Child Nutrition Programs will generate customer satisfac-

tion. Leadership builds the independence and confidence of the workteam, giving them pride of ownership and making them feel good about what they do.

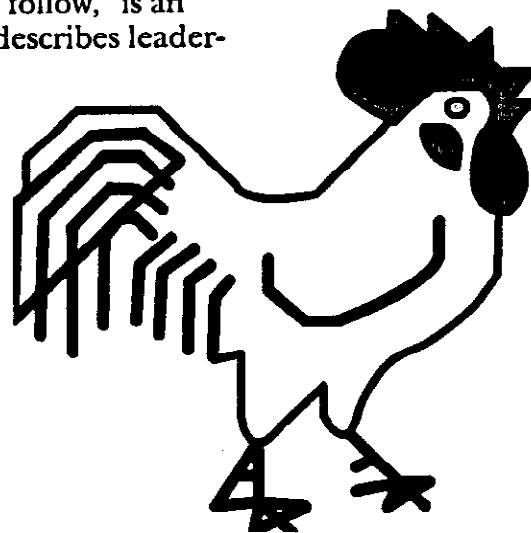
Leaders are courteous. They give staff the same polite attention they extend to strangers. At the same time, leaders are not seeking approval for themselves; they don't feel the need to win popularity contests. We don't follow leaders because we like them, necessarily; we follow because leaders make us like ourselves.

Dr. Josephine Martin, director of the National Food Service Management Institute, said, "I personally believe that leadership skills are at the base of success in realizing the opportunities in Child Nutrition Programs. Challenges are everywhere, but the greatest challenge is leading through the fast pace of change."

For change to happen, somebody has to lead the way. "Reach the right bird and the whole flock will follow," is an old adage that describes leadership through change.

Leaders learn from but don't dwell on the past. They act in the present and look to the future.

.....
**We follow
leaders not so
much for who
they are as
for how they
make us feel.**
.....



.....
**Leaders know
where they
are going
because they
have vision
and a mis-
sion.**
.....

Managers and supervisors who know group leadership techniques, motivational skills, and methods that stimulate and reward creativity will lead Child Nutrition Programs into the 21st century.

Leadership is a two-way deal. There would be no leaders without followers, no followers without leaders. We can't coach unless we have a team. The team won't win without coaching.

Leaders know where they are going because they have vision and a mission. A **vision** describes an ideal to strive for without necessarily describing how to accomplish that ideal. A **mission** is the organization's purpose or reason for being.

Here's a parallel: You want to build a home. The **vision** is the idea you give to the architect. The **mission** is the blueprint for the builder to follow.

own abilities, authorize them to act and take responsibility, those employees will do everything necessary to satisfy customers. They will carry out the mission.

People with vision and mission do everything twice. The blueprint creates the house in detail before the first plank was in place, then it is re-created with building materials. A recipe creates the entire dish in detail. Then we re-create it using ingredients.

Just so with food service. The leader has a vision and a mission. To carry out the mission, the leader develops strategies—all the goals, plans, and actions necessary to accomplish the mission.

If the leader's initial creation is good, followers can re-create a good product. The end result is that they trust the leader and feel good about themselves and their work.

Just as every team must have a coach, so every workteam must have a leader. At the best level, the leader also is a good manager, just as the coach is a good strategist.

Skills a leader needs to become a good manager can be categorized within five major management functions:

- Planning
- Controlling
- Organizing
- Staffing
- Directing

Leaders communicate their vision to their followers and to customers in everything they do. Leaders train, teach, and coach their followers to achieve the mission.

When strong leaders instill vision in their employees and give them confidence in their



Go for the Gold!

Planning

Good managers take time to listen to the ideas of others and observe the needs of the operation and its employees. When they develop work plans, they communicate goals clearly to staff, and get the workteam's agreement on objectives, strategies, and budgets.

Controlling

Good managers keep focus on the original objectives but revise strategies as necessary to reach those objectives. They keep employees informed about what's happening, changes made, and why. They get workteam cooperation in taking corrective action.

Organizing

Good managers establish clear lines of authority and responsibilities between their supervisors and their subordi-

nates. They know the organization structure.

Staffing

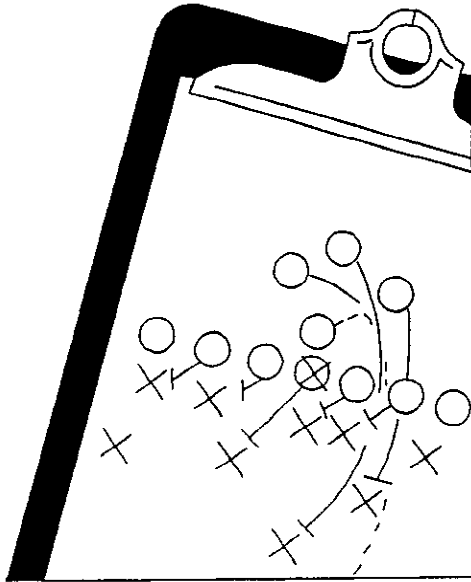
Good managers recruit and keep good staff. They train new employees thoroughly and continuously coach and support all staff to elevate their job skills and performance.

Directing

Good managers keep lines of communication open, discussing job assignments, complications, failures, complaints, and successes with their workteam. They are interested not only in getting the job done but in what kind of job the subordinates do. They use a personnel appraisal to motivate and give feedback.

When leaders are also good managers, the Child Nutrition Program is in position to Go for the Gold!





Personal Best

Winning the Gold in individual sports depends on how well we play the game. Winning the Gold in team sports depends on how we play together as a team.

What it takes to Go for the Gold:

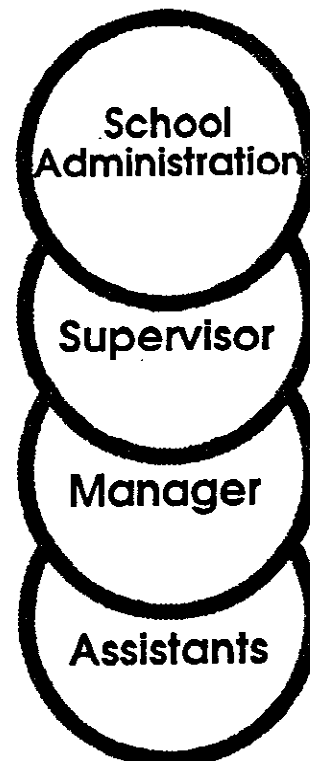
Commitment - Making that personal choice to reach for the Gold, to strive, to do whatever it takes, to give it our best shot.

Competence - Coaching and practice, developing the skills to win.

Communication - Getting an idea from one mind into another.

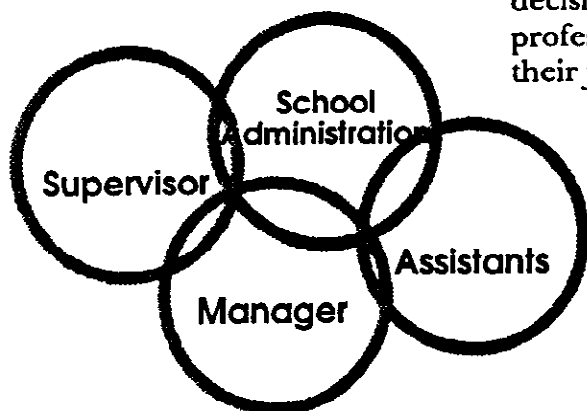
A workteam, like a sports team, depends on teamwork and how we all play the game, assisting and supporting other members of the team so that the team wins. The goal is the Gold for participation.

The workteam is organized differently from the work force. Here is a traditional organization chart:



Go for the Gold!

And the workteam organization:



Notice how little interaction there is between the different levels in the traditional organization. In the workteam concept, all the levels interact, working together and developing into a team.

Being a member of a winning workteam, like any other team, requires **commitment**, and **communication**. The results are a better product. Self-directed workteams are a way for organizations to function more effectively and deliver superior customer service.

Steps to organize the workteam begin with attitude, how we feel about our jobs and about our customers. Attitude starts at the top, with the supervisor and manager. When we see ourselves as professionals, who look professional and act professional, we will convey that pride, that sense of professionalism to staff.

The next step is trust. We trust our employees, the people on our team, to make good decisions. After all, they are professionals who should know their jobs.

Third, organize the team. The ideal size is six to nine. Less than six generates less creativity, enthusiasm, and energy. More than six starts a mob.

Roles—as needed—should be established and rotated; e.g., leader, facilitator, scribe, time keeper.

- Meet as a group and establish common goals, based on the mission of the operation.
- Delegate authority to make decisions, based on common goals and mission.
- Set a time to meet regularly to give and receive feedback. A meeting worksheet outlining reason for meeting, expected outcomes, and agenda will help keep the team on target. The workteam meeting time can coordinate with quality service training.

The team might begin with a SWOT analysis.

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

The acronym stands for a situational evaluation technique.

.....
Self-directed workteams are a way for organizations to function more effectively and deliver superior customer service.
.....

.....
**If we're going
to buy into
this concept
of workteams,
we must have
employees
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act.**
.....

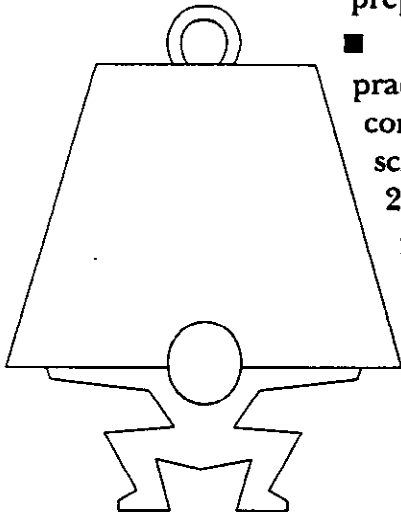
SWOT analysis is a form of brainstorming. The group identifies through discussion and consensus how well the program, a particular product, or a service is working and what needs to be done.

Celia manages a cafeteria in a school that had to put in portable classrooms to hold one-third more children than school capacity. Her kitchen and dining room cannot possibly serve that number. Celia takes the problem to her workteam.

They examine several possibilities and decide to buy picnic tables and make sack lunches available in the outdoor dining area. They put the decision to the SWOT analysis.

Strengths

- The students love to go outside.
- The staff can handle the extra participation even in their small kitchen; sack lunches take much less preparation time.
- They've had lots of practice. During a recent community flood, the school food service made 2,000 sack lunches a day.
- It's really easier to ensure healthy meals with no choices.



Weaknesses

- Challenge to the menu planner to keep the lunches interesting and varied.
- The solution is only temporary, but so are the portable classrooms.
- Students go outside to get away from adult control.

Opportunities

- Customer service; they like being outside
- Customer satisfaction (no waiting)
- Greater participation

Threats

- Rain
- Cold weather
- Students who don't return to class

The outside dining idea won. It was the list of opportunities that made the difference.

If we're going to buy into this concept of workteams, we must have employees motivated to act. Employees who have followed orders all their working lives will have to learn to solve problems, make decisions, and help teammates to reach their mutual goals.

Supervisors will learn to coach and train, as their job function changes.

Go for the Gold!

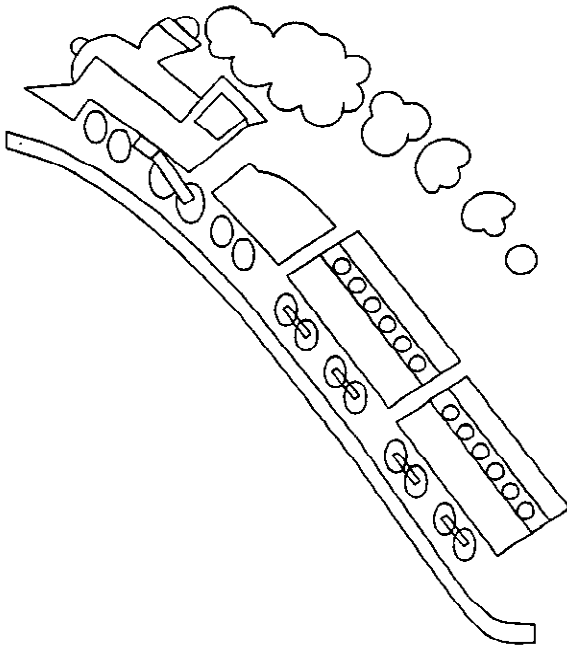
The following charts shows changeover from traditional to workteam management:

Traditional Responsibilities

Supervisor	Employee
Assigns jobs Sets schedule Prepares plans Obtains supplies and equipment Makes adjustments and corrections Monitors quality assurance Performs operation maintenance Prepares production records Performs safety inspections	Performs tasks assigned by supervisor

Workteam responsibilities

Supervisor	Employee
Coaching	Assigns jobs
Coordinating	Sets schedule
Supporting	Plans work
Enabling	Places orders
Training	Makes adjustments
Clarifying	Makes corrections
Listening	Monitors quality assurance
Planning	Performs operation maintenance
Delegating	Prepares production records
Reinforcing	Performs safety inspection
Communicating	Performs other tasks as needed and directed



How does the supervisor motivate the workteam to take on these added responsibilities? Motivational factors are those that provide job satisfaction. These are proven factors that motivate the staff of any work force:

.....
**Motivational
factors are
those that
provide job
satisfaction.**
.....

- Recognition
- More responsibility
- Opportunity for advancement
- Challenge
- Interesting work
- Opportunities for personal growth
- Development through experience

The factors that we *think* we work for—

- Money
- Benefits
- Job security

—do create dissatisfaction when they're missing. But they don't keep us on the job or give us any reason to try harder.

School food service is a perfect example. Wages traditionally are relatively low, compared to other industries and businesses, yet retention is relatively high. To look at some of the benefits and burdens of working in school food service, let's follow Clara, a food service assistant in a large urban school district, through her work day:

When Clara gets to work, she checks the schedule and finds that her assignment for the day is making whole-wheat rolls from scratch. She is pleased; she'd asked her workteam for a chance to practice the skills she learned at the district workshop on the new combo-therm oven.

Clara checks the average daily attendance and figures the percentage of children who will choose whole-wheat rolls before she calculates her yield and draws her supplies. She wants to be sure she has enough for every child, but she doesn't want to run over. The workteam is trying to buy another tilting skillet for batch stir-frying if they can stay under budget.

Go for the Gold!

The new oven works great, and the children come rushing into the cafeteria with their noses in the air like a pack of bird dogs. Oh, that baking bread smells wonderful! Clara believes the children have learned to like whole-grain breads because her product is so good and because of the way she encourages the children to try them.

The manager comes to report to Clara almost no plate waste on the whole-wheat rolls. She is just as pleased as Clara. Clara credits the new oven, but the manager credits the baker. She asks Clara to save a sample for the supervisor.

Clara really likes her job.

See how Clara's manager has set up a motivational working environment:

- Clara knows exactly what is expected; in fact, her assignment was her choice.
- She makes appropriate decisions and solves problems related to her job.
- Clara's good performance is noticed, and she gets positive reinforcement.
- Her immediate supervisor coaches and provides feedback.
- She knows the priorities and goals are to encourage students to improve food intake consistent with the

Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- She is able to grow in her job through further training in new techniques.

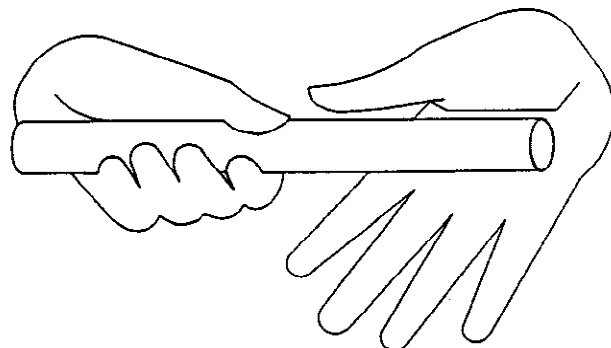
With the traditional style of supervision, Clara's manager would have told Clara to make rolls and given specific instructions how the manager wanted them made. Later she'd be in the kitchen, checking up to see if Clara was doing as she was told.

The example shows how the workteam concept changed the traditional role. Clara has the authority, as well as the motivation, to do it her way.

As one player on a self-directed workteam, Clara had an opportunity to share responsibility. She knows her job; she knows what needs to be done and how to do it. She is the best possible person to make sure the job is done correctly and efficiently.

Working together, the team has a better grasp of what the job requires than their manager could possibly have. They know the capacity of the kitchen equipment and the time it takes to do each task better than the supervisor who plans the menus.

.....
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.....
**Continuous
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the job pro-
duces the best
team.**
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The team is in the best position to plan the work schedule. With open communication lines between management and staff, they can share ideas about how the system should work and streamline the system throughout.

"I feel that someone is finally listening to me," is the most common comment when a workteam is functioning as it should. Managers of workteams say they are free to get more of their own work done.

One prerequisite, however—workteams need continued support and attention for success. Self-directed workteams are not new toys that management buys, plays with, puts aside until the batteries are dead, and then wonders why it doesn't work any more.

Teamwork is a benefit and a boon to busy managers who never seem to have time for the tasks we really consider important to the

job but just don't seem to get done.

Tasks that aren't on a tight deadline get put on the

back burner, and there they stay while we run as fast as we can to do today's jobs. We're too busy putting out brush fires to worry about the forest.

Self-directed workteams can help solve management problems. Instead of trying to do

everything ourselves, we can authorize our employees to take on more responsibilities. Allow them to use their talents and abilities, which allows us to focus on new roles, ones that are critical to the organization's success.

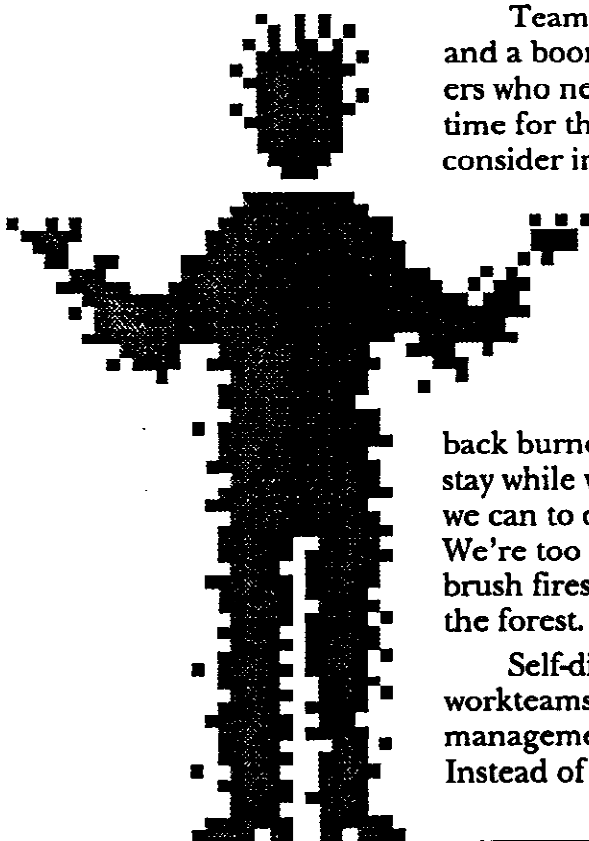
The most important factor in the self-directed workteam concept is the involvement and participation of all employees in making decisions and accepting responsibility for everything that happens in the workplace.

Meanwhile, the roles and responsibility of the supervisor and manager change, because leading a workteam is more critical to the organization than merely being a boss. The supervisor becomes more coach and trainer than boss. In this role, the supervisor spends most of the time developing the talents of the team. Everyone's job becomes more challenging, productive, and meaningful.

Training the workteam shouldn't interrupt the work schedule; quite the opposite. On-the-job training is the best kind. Adults learn best by doing.

Most cafeteria employees are visual learners. They are happiest and learn best when the coach shows new skills.

Continuous learning on the job produces the best team. Instead of transferring employees to the conference room, we train on the production floor.



Go for the Gold!

We find new ways to train so that the training doesn't disrupt normal duties. The supervisor's job becomes more challenging and meaningful, as the workteam progresses and develops new skills.

As the workteam trains, employees can become multi-talented. Cross-training assists them to develop professionally. The staff feels more competent, sees more potential in the job, and generally is more content.

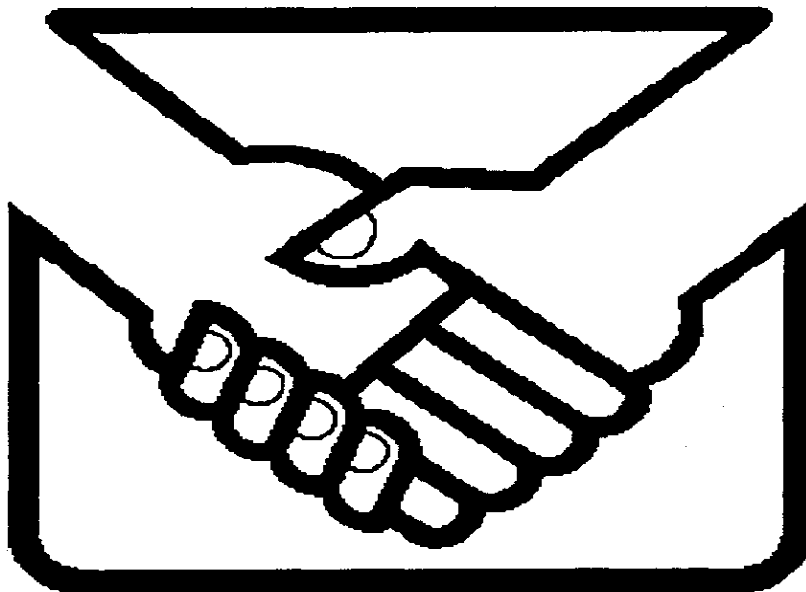
Employees on a workteam come to know every job and work process within their work site. When this happens, we have a team that can distribute the work load more evenly. These are the employees who have a stake in customer service and are equipped to contribute to customer satisfaction.

The best part—it works! A survey of Fortune 500 companies reported the following results from implementing the self-directed workteam concept :

- ◆ 77 percent reported improved productivity
- ◆ 72 percent reported improved product quality
- ◆ 65 percent reported greater job satisfaction
- ◆ 57 percent reported better customer service
- ◆ 55 percent reported reduced waste

Workteams play the game together, as a unit. As the players improve the team's commitment, competence, and communication, they each achieve their personal best.

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Checking Signals



A player who feels needed will be more committed to the team. We all crave approval and recognition. Coaches who communicate to players that they are needed and that their efforts are appreciated build winning teams.

Communication means getting an idea from one mind into another. Usually we do that by talking about it.

We can accomplish thought transfer through the written word or pictures, but most people prefer to tell it. We like to talk to each other.

Communication is not so much a gift as it is a compulsion. We are social creatures who desperately want other people to understand. To make that happen, we have to communicate our thoughts. The more effectively we communicate, the more satisfactory the relationship

between the two minds—the one trying to communicate an idea and the one who gets the message.

Nonverbal communication conveys feelings. Nonverbal communication is not so much about the idea as how we feel about the idea. Often we aren't even aware that we are being obvious about how we feel. If these are not really emotions that we wish to communicate, then we need to know what we are communicating through our body language.

Communication is an imperfect art, at best. If we want to communicate with others (and all coaches and teams must communicate with each other) we need all the skills we can get. We all have a communications tool kit that contains speech, writing, pictures, and body language. How well we get our ideas across depends on how well we use all of our tools.



Go for the Gold!

The good news is that communication skills can be learned, developed, and perfected. Managers who don't communicate well with staff create problems; managers who are good communicators solve problems. One of the most successful corporations of our time believes that more than 90 percent of organizational problems stem from poor communication.

Managers who want to improve customer service are confronted with a challenging communication task. They must make staff understand:

- why customer satisfaction is important to school food service
- what the manager wants to do to improve service
- how staff communication with customers achieves customer satisfaction

What managers communicate to staff and what staff communicates to customers are different messages, but the tools of communication are the same. Improving our tools and how we use them has the same objective in either case. Let's look first at an example, a manager named Rose communicating with her staff.

Rose's supervisor planned a Wednesday lunch menu that Rose saw as a killer. She figured she'd need two more staff members to do all the baking and entrees, all the pre-plated sandwich

choices, all the different dessert choices.

Oh sure, more choices boosted participation, but there are limits. Rose decided she'd have to cook today, and skip the menu-planning coaching session she had scheduled for the workteam. All they could do this day is follow orders.

Rose dashes into the kitchen, flinging out orders to the bakers, making reassignments, pushing people around, and jumping into the preparation herself, everywhere she perceived the staff getting behind.

You can guess what happened; the Wednesday lunch was every bit the disaster Rose predicted, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Rose's body language communicated panic to her staff. They picked up on her resentment, too, but she didn't want to communicate to them that she was hostile toward her supervisor.

In nonverbal communication, which exposes our feelings, we tend to get back what we give out. Of course the staff responded with panic and resentment.

Rose failed to communicate the problem clearly to her staff.

.....
The good news is that communication skills can be learned, developed, and perfected.
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She didn't take time or think through what she wanted to tell them but flung orders as she rushed around. Nobody knew what she wanted them to do. So of course, nobody did what she wanted them to do.

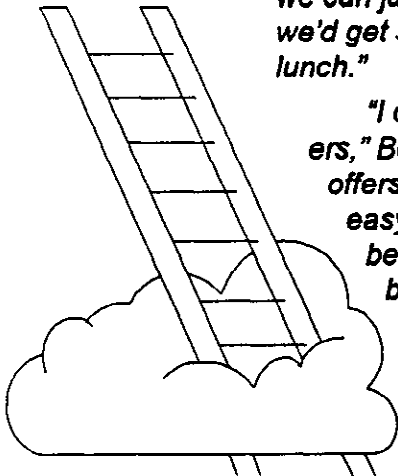
The most serious consequence was Rose's failure to engage the workteam, which could have handled the situation. Her job is to coach; the work team's job is to cope, to make reassignments if necessary. Rose pushed the workteam and their training aside, as she put out brush fires.

Gaye has a different style of coaching, and a different kind of team:

Gaye's workteam is preparing the assignments for next week. The workteam captain suggests to Gaye that Wednesday's lunch menu preparation is a bit heavy for the staff. Gaye asks the team for their recommendations.

"Lighten up on breakfast," Annie suggests. "Let's substitute bagels for home-made muffins. We have bagels on the menu for Tuesday, so we can just switch days. Then we'd get started earlier on lunch."

"I could help the bakers," Bessie, the salad cook, offers. "My assignment is easy on Wednesday. I've been trained in making bread, and then the bakers could concentrate on making desserts."



"Why don't we ask the supervisor to change the menu?" asks Mary Jo, one of the bakers.

"Those are all good suggestions," Gaye tells the team. "Let's look at all three. Are there any disadvantages if we switch bagels on Wednesday and muffins on Tuesday?"

"The only thing is, bread delivery comes on Monday," Annie says. "The bagels won't be as fresh."

"What do you all think about Bessie baking the bread on Wednesday?"

"Fine," everybody agrees. Bessie has had the training, she's willing, and the bakers are happy to have her help.

"Mary Jo, if we ask the supervisor to change menus, what will that do to our market order?" Gaye asks.

"No, that will make more work instead of less," Mary Jo says. "The team already did the ordering, and we would have to do it all over. But let's see if the supervisor won't let us help with the menu planning occasionally. We know more about the equipment in our own kitchen."

"That's a good idea," Gaye answers. "You know, the Wednesday menu will work fine in Dodge City with their staffing pattern; it just doesn't fit our situation."

Go for the Gold!

Gaye does everything right:

- She listens. Listening is the first element of communication.
- She knows her staff; she knows their names and abilities.
- The employees are informed and involved in their organization.
- Gaye is a coach and a counselor instead of a boss.
- The work team makes the decision.
- Employees understand why the decision is made and accept it because they had a part in deciding.
- Gaye gives credit and appreciation for the workteam's input.
- She does not criticize inappropriate suggestions but leads the employees to see the problems.
- She uses advance problem solving.
- She delegates authority to employees so they can solve problems.
- Her cross-training enlarges and diversifies employees' work assignments.
- She treats employees as she would like to be treated.

Such is the effect of communications on staff morale. Job satisfaction is a valuable element in the way communication directly influences performance.

Gaye communicates to employees in word and deed that she respects their ability and expects them to give their best to their jobs. Gaye's expectations lead to superior performance. When a manager's expectations are high, production is high.

Rose, on the other hand, doesn't trust her staff to cope with a difficult work schedule. She unintentionally treats them in ways that lower their performance. Thus, they live up to her expectations of poor performance. When a manager's expectations are low, productivity is low.

How others do it

A tremendously successful department store makes the principle work with just one sentence in the employees' handbook: "Use your good judgment in all situations."

Industrial firms discovered the powerful influence expectations exert on employees' performance at least three decades ago and have thoroughly tested the expectation effect in their own firms. What they found: Most employees do what they believe they are expected to do.

.....
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**Learning to
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One such firm grouped superior performers into one workteam under a superior manager, and found that the workteam exceeded expectations, even beyond superior performance. Other employees referred to the unit as the "super staff."

As other good producers were identified, they were grouped and assigned to the most capable managers, and those teams exceeded expectations, too. Finally, the firm had only one group left of employees with little chance of becoming superior producers. While the super-staffs' production continued to climb, the lowest unit did even worse than expected. When differences in the groups were identified and quantified, most related to communications between manager and employees.

Learning to use the tools of communication leads to better management, which leads to improved customer relations.

The first step is listening. Hear what people say. Listen to employees, and listen to customers. If either party fails to listen when people talk to each other, no communication is happening.

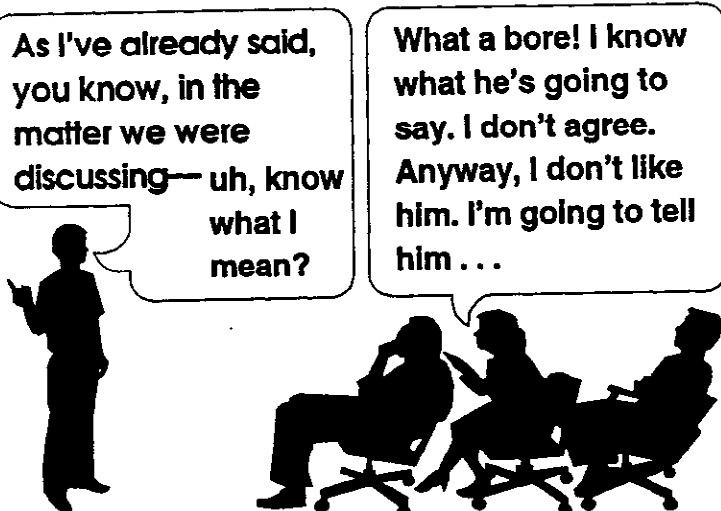
Listening sounds easy, but it's not. We listen faster than people talk; that is, our minds race ahead of the discussion. We think we know what the speaker is going to say, so we tune him out. Unless we really concentrate, we get distracted.

The most tempting distraction is planning the response. We're so occupied with planning what we're going to say that we don't hear what's been said. No wonder so many responses are irrelevant.

Granted, it's hard to listen to people with poor communication skills. Children who express their thoughts fluently and articulate adults definitely are the exception.

Never mind how they say it; what they say is important. Managers can train themselves to focus on what the employee is saying. Staff can be patient, giving customers a chance to express their wants and needs.

If the speaker is telling us something we really don't want to hear, listening becomes all the more difficult. Instead of hearing, we make mental arguments and excuses. But if we are really serious about customer service, those things we don't want to hear are the very things we need to listen to.



Go for the Gold!

Fair or not, complaints and perceived grievances give us clues to customer satisfaction. Listen for new ideas and new ways to think about old ideas.

How to hear when we listen:

- Resist distractions.
- Concentrate on the speaker's ideas.
- Keep an open mind.

To put the employee in a receptive frame of mind—

- **Communicate to employees** why they need to know what you wish to say. Adult learners want to know the reason why they are learning something new.
- **Build an atmosphere of trust.** Trust eliminates the mental filters that interfere with communication.
- **Give feedback and ask for feedback.** Open wide the communication channels. Give recognition. Let staff know we listen.

Listening is one side of the communication coin. The other side of the coin is getting our ideas into the minds of our employees. With the "show and tell" method, using all the tools in the communication tool-box, we can train and coach correctly, quickly, and consistently.

Employees who work with their hands tend to be visual learners. School food service staff learn best what they can see, when they get the picture.

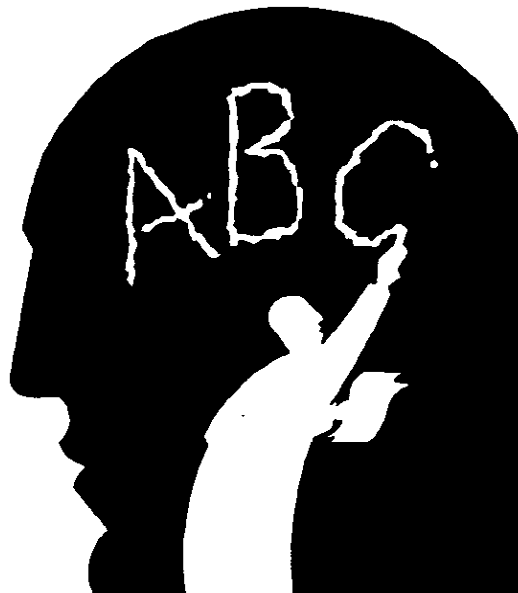
Communication that works best has four steps:

- 1) tell
- 2) show
- 3) practice
- 4) use

Telling an employee how to do a job is one method of teaching. Start with the directions. They may be written, as in a procedure, or told in a training workshop, where the coach explains. However, verbal or written explanations are limited. We remember only about 20 percent of what we hear.

We remember 30 percent of what we see. Demonstration is another communication method, particularly effective with visual learners. Combining telling and showing with practice should produce about 70 percent retention of the ideas we want to communicate.

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Trust eliminates the mental filters that interfere with communication.
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Hands-on practice reinforces the demonstration. Give the employee a chance to practice what they have just seen. Then follow up to make sure the staff is actually using in their daily work the idea we have communicated.

The four steps work together like this:

In the high school cafeteria Cindy manages, the participation rate is only around 50 percent. Cindy's customer surveys indicate that the dominant student complaint is about long waits to get served.

Cindy checks the waiting time and finds that the student at the back of the line waits an average of 8 minutes and 35 seconds before reaching the servers. She times the serving line and finds that 13.4 customers are served per minute. The serving line is moving well; waiting in line is the problem.

Cindy considers a portable cart, with self-serve, pre-plated sandwiches and salads. She submits her idea to the workteam, all of whom agree. Since they are already doing so well on the serving line, they can't go any faster, and any way to relieve their stress has a lot of appeal.

Cindy schedules a training session, showing the cooking staff how to produce the new choices. She gives the cooks a handout on the assembly line method and demonstrates, showing how the plates should look after assembly.

The team works out the production schedule to include the new choices. The assigned staff sets up a practice run—they assemble plates, which they give to the football team to have after practice.

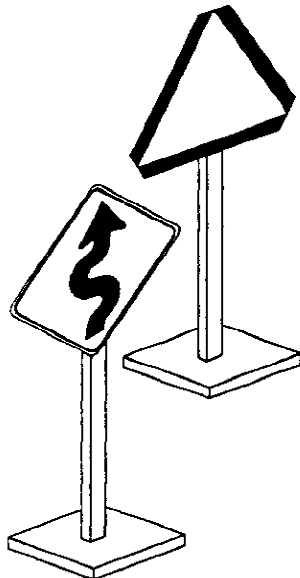
The first day the staff did just what they had practiced. With advance endorsement from the football team, customers raid the self-serve cart and wipe it out in the first 23 minutes of the first lunch period. Cindy sees customers that she didn't even know were students.

The next day, the same thing happened. This time second period students threatened to riot and left without eating. Seeing her dream of boosting participation walk out the door, Cindy asked the workteam why they didn't prepare for more students.

"You didn't tell us," they said.

On the verge of an angry response, Cindy realized they were right. She had told them how, showed them how, helped them practice, but they did not know how to apply, to use the information to meet the need.

Supervisors who are team builders are good communicators. Conversely, supervisors who constantly check up on their staff, who oversee every task, who tightly control the operation show employees that they are not trusted.



.....
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.....

Go for the Gold!

Employees hear supervisor's words through filters of resentment and suspicion.

We can also erect filters in the listener's mind with the tone of voice. The actual words account for only seven percent of the impact of what we say; tone of voice for 38 percent. If we want to communicate an idea correctly, we must pay attention to **how** we say it.

Think about the little word "oh"—it has no meaning without inflection. Given the proper tone, "Oh!" can express surprise, disappointment, delight, disgust, or fear. Try answering "Oh" in the following situations and see what a difference tone makes:

She's going to marry your ex-husband.

Your mother wants you to call.

I saw your name in the paper.

Virgil is waiting for you.

Here is your check.

The impact of words and tone account for only 45 percent of what we communicate. The rest—55 percent of the impact—is body language. The most powerful message we communicate has nothing to do with talking.

How staff feels about supervisors and how customers feel about service has less to do with what we say than what we feel. What we give out is usually what we get back. We can have an amazing effect on staff with our body language, just as they can change the whole atmosphere in

the cafeteria by their body language.

Look at the feelings we can express just with the fingers on one hand:

Open extended hand

Clenched fist

Raised clenched fist

Raised index finger

Raised thumb

What do these gestures say about how we feel?

Arms folded across chest

Hands on hips

Frown

Looking down

Yawning

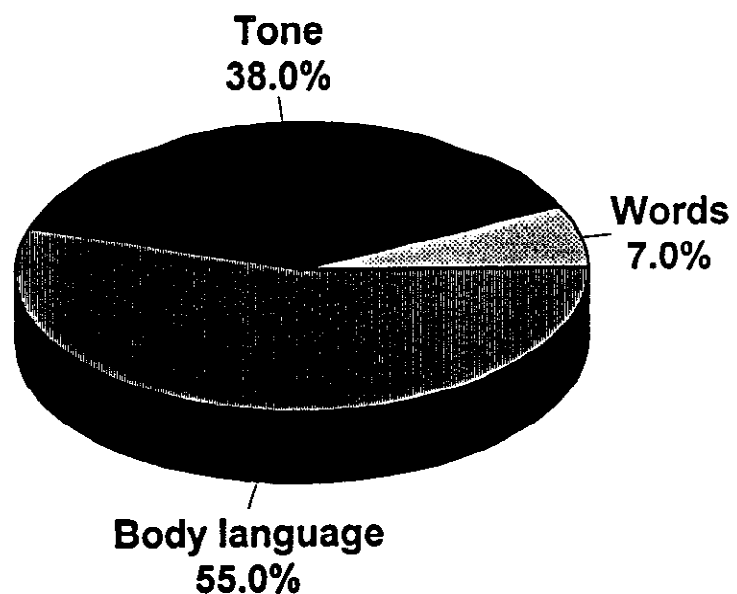
Foot tapping

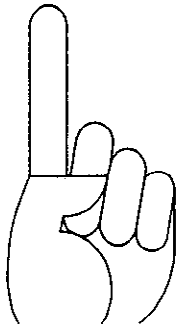
Sighing

Slouching or leaning

.....
The most powerful message we communicate has nothing to do with talking.
.....

Impact





Do these gestures convey a different feeling?

Smiling
Leaning forward
Direct eye contact
Head nodding
Erect posture

Can you think of body language that makes customers feel that we are eager to satisfy their wants and needs? How would we convey warmth, honesty, sincerity, self-confidence, friendliness? Probably it is easier to convey hostility, boredom, or impatience, but which of these emotions do we want our staff to see in us?

What feelings do we want to convey to our customers? Think about when you are a customer—do you like being served by someone who is hostile or someone who is friendly? By someone who is patient or someone who is hurried?

When we consider the students, teachers, administra-

tors who are our customers, and that their influence extends to parents and the whole community, then body language becomes important. Nonverbal messages are even more important than spoken words to help us achieve our goal of customer service.

Terry Keisler, program specialist at the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of School Food Services, offers this advice:

- ♦ Clear, concise instructions and expectations enable us to do our work with little help.
- ♦ Open lines of communication encourage suggestions and questions.
- ♦ Trust and praise motivates people to do the best job possible.
- ♦ Being courteous and helping others is a sure way to influence people.

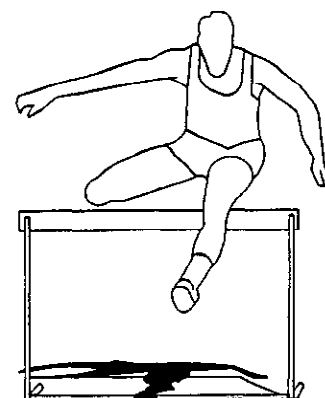
We all respond to kindness!

Coaching and Training

Because we work in schools, we tend to think of learning as a one-time process with a termination point, such as graduation. We all need to rethink training, to see continuing education as an ongoing process that prepares all of us for change.

When they understand the changes going on in Child Nutrition Programs are continuous, staff will see the need for lifelong learning. As supervisors and managers, it is our responsibility to explain why the training process is continuing and indispensable, helping us to grow in our careers.

"Knowing where Child Nutrition Programs are going and how to help them get there," in the words of Josephine Martin, suggest major opportunities for preparing personnel for the future. The National Food Service Management Institute, with Dr. Martin as executive director, has responsibility for assisting Child Nutrition Programs to prepare for the 21st Century.



"Keeping the programs based on customer-driven wants and needs," is the way to go, she believes. She says the work place must be restructured for high performance to move Child Nutrition Programs into the 21st Century.

Dr. Martin conceives Child Nutrition Programs as "a value-added service in education and health."

"We believe that every child will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of effective Child Nutrition Programs, with healthy food choices, provided in pleasant surroundings, served by compassionate and empowered people." That is the NFSMI vision.



Go for the Gold!

The vision is clearly defined. It suggests a higher reach, that we set the bar above our personal best and see if we can achieve more than we ever have before, more than we ever thought we would. The vision urges that we Go for the Gold!

People who are involved and excited about their jobs find they can do more than they thought they could. It is the leader's expectations that encourages them to greater heights.

"There is nothing wrong with our goals; what's wrong is how we're doing things," according to the president of the Education Commission of the United States. Education is changing. Child Nutrition Programs, which are an integral part of the educational system, must keep pace.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one that is most adaptable to change." (Charles Darwin)
Equipping employees with the skills to adapt to the rapid rate of change offers enormous opportunity for supervisors and managers.

Change can be threatening because change alters the way we've always done things. For change to happen, somebody has to lead the way. Remember, the old adage says, "Reach the right bird and the whole flock will follow." The "right bird" is the



one with leadership qualities.

Supervisors and managers create the atmosphere for others to follow. "There is only one way under heaven to get anybody to do anything, and that is by making him want to do it." (Dale Carnegie)

Creating an atmosphere where employees want to learn is the first step in training them for the challenges of change. The next step is giving staff superior skills to serve customers. To increase customer service and participation at every level of the school nutrition program is the ultimate goal of training.

Supervisors must be willing to show employees—through behavior modeling, policies, training, and reward systems—what customer service means. When they are prepared and ready, then the supervisor authorizes those trained employees to make changes for which they are accountable.

The supervisor who—

- ♦ trains staff to do the job,
- ♦ motivates them to want to, and
- ♦ keeps them posted on how they're doing,

—will have a workteam able and willing to serve the customers.

Taking a business view, consider training as an investment. Training boosts the value of the capital investment. Trained and skilled employees become our most valuable resource.



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Employees who are well trained do a better job, develop self esteem, and become workers more fully committed to the organization and its goals. They also become more valuable to the program—we can't afford to lose trained employees. Staff must be rewarded for their contribution—with further investment in their training, with feedback on how they're doing, and with benefits and raises, as possible.

Training is the link to better things. Improving the service the program renders is only one side of the coin. The other side is greater job satisfaction for the staff. Unless staff sees training as a means to an end, employees won't take it very seriously.

Training must be relevant to the job at hand, whatever that may be for the employee we want to train. When we use prepared lessons, for example, we should adapt those lessons to our own particular situation. Here is an example:

For years Alice had been teaching a lesson to the entire staff on the virtues of whole grains, based on plans that came with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans materials. As the manager in a school where none of the students would accept whole-grain bread, she felt that the message wasn't getting through, so she kept teaching the same lesson.

Finally one of the cooks spoke up:

"Why are we going over this again? We never make whole-grain bread; the kids won't eat it," Jolynn said

"But I'm teaching you why it is good," Alice said, "Why can't you convince the students?"

"You want us to talk to the students about nutrition?" Jolynn was incredulous.

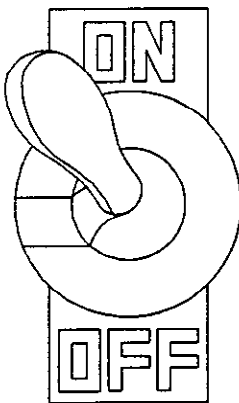
"Yes, of course," Alice said. "The cafeteria is where they learn. I'm sorry I hadn't made that clear.

"Tell you what, since you already know the material, let's change the lesson and make it a role play. Let's practice sharing the information with the students and convince them to try whole-grain bread."

For Child Nutrition Program employees to make a significant contribution to more healthful meals for students they must know the basic facts, but they also must have both the training and the authority to talk to students about nutritious meals.

What Alice did right:

- ✓ She did think about her target audience. She knew that the cashier needed the information just as much as the cooks because she talks to the students at least as much as the servers.
- ✓ She did spread the training over time.



Go for the Gold!

- ✓ She did reinforce training with repetition.
- ✓ She did use the training to try to solve an existing problem that the cooks knew about.

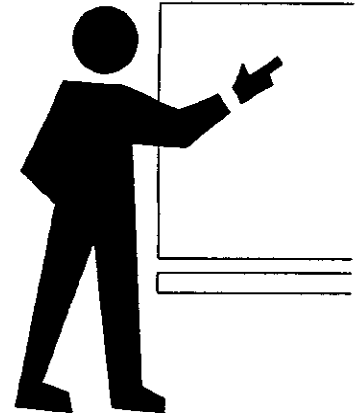
Where Alice missed:

- ✓ Alice didn't ask the staff to solve the problem. She came up with an answer before she knew the question.
- ✓ She taught theory but not practice. She didn't relate the knowledge she wanted them to learn to the real problem.
- ✓ Alice did not adapt the lesson plan she had on hand and make it specific to fit her staff and her school.
- ✓ She let one cook do all the talking.

Here are some techniques for getting everyone involved¹:

- ◆ Ask a question, pause for a few seconds. Give everyone time to formulate an answer. Restate the question, and then call on someone by name.
- ◆ Ask frequent questions with short answers that everyone can say out loud. Example: "We want our customers to learn to like what kind of bread?"

- ◆ Instead of the traditional information handout, give trainees a handout with questions that follow the training outline. After each major section, have participants respond with answers to the questions.
- ◆ Get trainees to raise their hands. This technique gets everyone involved and can be useful when you want them to take sides. For example, ask, "Who wants to take the part of the server on this role play? Who wants to be a student?"
- ◆ Have trainees talk to each other. Example, say, "Turn to your neighbor and find out the one thing she likes most about whole-wheat bread."
- ◆ Prepare a script of good and bad illustrations of the techniques being taught, such as nonverbal communications. Number the examples. Call on one participant at a time to act out each example. Have the group tell what is good or bad about each example.
- ◆ After each lesson, ask trainees to write down how they will apply what they just learned.



¹ Adapted from Parry, Scott. An equal opportunity to learn. Trn. and Dev. JI., Jan., 1991.

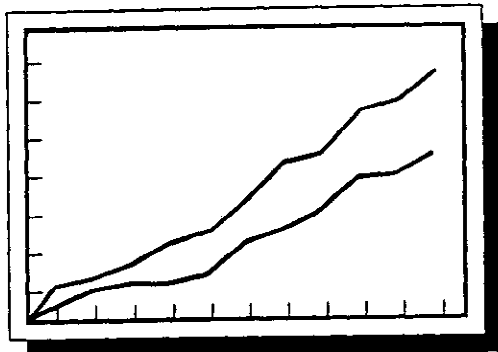
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**If a job is
taking too
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manager finds
out why**
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- ◆ Develop a self-assessment, an exercise that lets trainer and trainee know whether the training achieved its goals. Examples are the puzzles at the end of the lessons that accompany this handbook.

These are some of the signs that training and coaching on customer service are working:

- ◆ We know who our customers are and who the people are who influence them.
- ◆ We are filling wants and needs of customers.
- ◆ Leaders have motivated and authorized the workteam.
- ◆ Manager and staff have learned to communicate with customers and each other.
- ◆ Everyone, from supervisor to cook, is satisfying our customers.

As training moves us closer to our goal of greater participation, need for training doesn't end. In fact, it is likely to create yet another training need.



When we have greater participation, the staff is busier and may have trouble getting meals served on time. Now we need to raise staff productivity.

Some of the ways we can coach staff for greater productivity:

- ◆ Training to improve job efficiency
- ◆ Teaching work simplification methods
- ◆ Developing and demonstrating a more efficient flow of work

As a first step to boost productivity, the manager will observe the staff at work, recording what each employee does during a specified time period, usually 10 or 15 minutes. With the help of the supervisor, she will pinpoint any problems. Following are examples:

Does the cook assemble all ingredients before beginning preparation or is she walking clear across the kitchen each time she adds something to the recipe?

Is the new employee making one sandwich at a time or is she using the assembly method?

If a job is taking too long, the manager finds out why, using the following process:

- ◆ Chart the flow to divide the job into parts.
- ◆ Look at each step to see if there is a better way.
- ◆ Streamline where possible.
- ◆ Train employee.
- ◆ Follow up and evaluate.

Go for the Gold!

Well-trained employees know what to do, do it on time, and use the time and energies saved to serve customers. To achieve this ideal, all managers must be trainers. Not all managers are comfortable in that role, as few have had formal training in teaching adult learners. There are several sources of assistance that will help managers learn to train and build confidence in their abilities to do so.

One is the food service supervisor. Another is the state office. Many states have developed curriculum and training guides, and those training mate-

rials are available to other states. Another source is the NETPRO Program established by the National Food Service Management Institute that set up a network of trainers in almost every state.

Mississippi's Child Nutrition Bureau developed a certification course for managers that teaches the basics of adult learning, with actual lesson plans for managers to use to train their staffs. These lessons are available through the National Food Service Management Institute. On the following pages are ideas excerpted from **Mississippi Staff Development Skills**.

Recognizing how adults want to be treated

Adults want to know **WHY** they are learning something. We've got people to see and things to do...and we're the same way when we learn—we want to know:

What's in this for me?

In training employees, this is how we can let them know the answer to the question:

1. Explain why the information they're learning is important to them
2. Make sure employees know what they're going to gain from the session
3. Tell them what it's going to do for them and the food service program
4. Show them how the information will make their jobs easier, quicker, more interesting

Adults want to take an **ACTIVE** part in learning.

Actually trying an activity generally makes it easier to understand; easier to grasp the "total picture."

Adults learn better and faster having actually "worked an activity."

Being involved has several benefits:

- makes learning more meaningful;
- supports what you're learning;
- it's more fun!

As a staff developer or trainer, child nutrition professionals may assist employees in learning situations if they:

1. Let them discover things on their own
2. Ask questions
3. Involve them in activities (games, etc.)

Adults want to know if they are **LEARNING** what is being taught. You can help employees know if they are learning if you:

1. Compliment them when they answer correctly
2. Ask them to put something they've learned to use—when they succeed they know they've reached their goal
3. Ask them to summarize what they've learned
4. Give them feedback on their practice

Encouraging adults to learn

Types of Trainers

You have the chance to choose one of four trainers for your next staff development session. Which one of these would you choose? Why?

Ms. Clear who always presents her sessions very clearly so you can understand

Ms. Care who always cares about all the people in her sessions

Go for the Gold!

Ms. Excited who always has a lot of energy, emotion and excitement in her sessions

Ms. Know who always knows the information she is teaching in her sessions

We know that a really good staff developer actually has some of each of these characteristics:

Clarity

- Her/his presentations are clear and understandable
- Empathy means he/she cares about the people in his/her sessions

She/he makes sure they know he/she cares. She/he does this in what she/he says and in how he/she says it

Enthusiasm

- A good instructor shows excitement and enthusiasm

She/he knows these feelings are contagious and that if he/she has them—soon the class will, too

Expertise

- The effective Staff Developer knows what he/she's talking about—she/he's an "expert" on the topic he/she's presenting—she/he has expertise

Characteristics of a successful staff developer	What it means	How to show it
Clarity Clearness	Teach in a way that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• easy to follow• easy to understand• clear to the listener	
Empathy	Consider your participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what they want and need• see things as they see them• Think of them as people—just like you	
Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• care about them	
Enthusiasm Excitement	Show your participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that you like what you are teaching• that your subject is important• that you have energy, emotion, and excitement	

Coaching, how important it is

Probably the most effective **INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL** in our food service operations is that of Coaching. We refer to it as the ongoing activity of encouraging people to do what they learned and to continue doing it. It often involves on-the-job training. It often involves reteaching, step-by-step guidance, or on-the-job training. Coaching should be done in a friendly, positive manner.

In coaching remember the following:

Employees should always be shown the correct way to do a task and be given time to practice it.

Give them feedback on how they are doing.

Sometimes they will need a word of encouragement or motivation.

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Talk to them about working toward their end result, knowing how to do what is being shown them.

Major reasons employees don't get the job done that may benefit from coaching:

They don't know how.

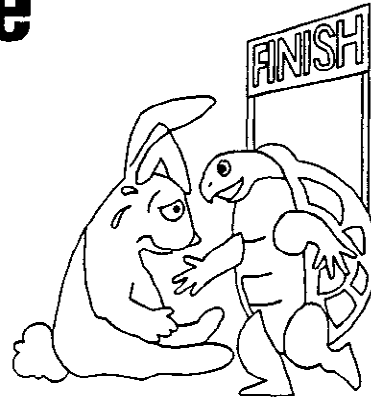
Someone or something keeps them from it.

They don't want to.

Leaders set the climate in the workplace. The climate is the environment, the atmosphere within which people get the job done. Climate is created by the way people treat each other and

the customers. The atmosphere that is upbeat, positive, and enthusiastic is the one where the team is prepared to Go for the Gold.

The Competitive Edge



Marketing is selling, designed to expand market share for a business. Specifically, marketing Child Nutrition Programs expects to boost participation.

Communication helps marketing achieve its objectives through persuasion. Good communication improves customer service and satisfaction. Communication supports marketing objectives, but marketing is not the same thing as communication.

Our customers feel wanted and needed in their fast-food hangouts. Fast-food franchises succeed in communicating that message, which makes customers want to go back. Through this communicated message, fast-food franchises are able to get an enor-

mous market share. How do we make our customers feel wanted and needed in the school cafeteria?

The four Ps have been the guiding light of marketing for more than a generation. As new marketing definitions evolve and new marketing techniques develop, the principles remain the same. While Child Nutrition Programs are a unique business with unique marketing needs, we employ the same basic principles in our marketing plans. Let's see how we can apply the four Ps to marketing school food service, just as all businesses do to market any other product and service.

Product

Our product is unique. We supply nutritious food; we dispense good health. That ought to give us the winning edge!



Go for the Gold!

Good health is not what our competitors are selling—quite the opposite, in most cases. Studies on the dietary intake of children who do not participate in the school lunch program show that their nutrient intake is substantially below the one-third of recommended allowances that the school lunch contributes.

Our marketing task is to communicate to all five segments of our market the special contribution our product makes in the lives of children—their children, their students, our customers. Our purpose is unique among food service establishments. Our products make a big difference in the well being of Americans—in students today and in adults of tomorrow. Our product ensures that participating students go to class ready to learn, and our product promotes better lifelong eating habits.

Even so, our product must compete with all the other good-tasting products to which our customers have access. Here are some product marketing tips:

- Make gradual changes to bring recipes and menus up to the standards of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Provide consistently tasty food choices that look good.
- Integrate the food service program with the total school curriculum.

- Sell all customers in our market segments on the merits of our product.

Never forget that we market customer service along with our product. Like it or not, Child Nutrition Programs compete with other food businesses, especially fast-food franchises. Our customers like our competitors' products. To get the business, we must be at least as attentive to the wants and needs of our customers as our competitors are.

When we communicate to our customers the unique qualities of our product and our sincere interest in their satisfaction, we'll beat the competition.

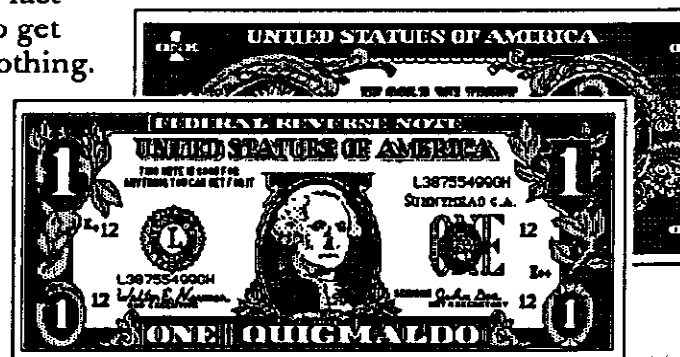
Price

We've got the competition beat on price. Do all our customers know that?

Students are influenced by parents. Studies show that when parents are aware that school meals are a good value, their children are more likely to participate. How many Child Nutrition Programs market price to students, teachers, administrators, parents and community?

Our price marketing can capitalize on the fact that we all like to get something for nothing. Marketing that capitalizes on added value tempts any customer, no matter how much money he has available.

.....
To get the business, we must be at least as attentive to the wants and needs of our customers as our competitors are.
.....



.....
If we're serious about customer service, marketing place will get priority in our bid to capture more of the market.
.....



When the biggest and most successful firms use any marketing technique, you can be sure that they have done extensive market research to prove its worth, and they all market on price.

That's why supermarkets give away coupons. We could do that. That's why auto dealers have their rebate schemes. We could do that. That's why food businesses offer something free when you buy a meal. We could do that. All those add-on marketing gimmicks widely and wisely used by companies small and large don't cost, they pay. They work.

We can do that. The cashier can hand out cents-off coupons for an extra food, good with a meal on a slow day. We can place an ad in the school paper with a coupon. We can give every child a small prize, just like the fast-food franchises do. Book covers, for example, with the school's football schedule along with food service offerings and a la carte prices. Aligning school sports with school food service is a smart move.

The changing demographics in this nation clue us into price marketing:

- Only 7% of American households consist of the traditional family—working father, homemaker mothers, and two children.
- 54% of mothers with school-age children work, and the number is rising rapidly.

- About one in six Americans is over the age of 55, the fastest growing segment of the population.

Implications for Child Nutrition Programs:

- More children of single, working mothers have greater need for free and reduced meals.
- Working mothers need convenience and value, more breakfast programs and after-school programs.
- Meal rates for summer feeding programs are higher than school lunch.
- Older Americans need elderly feeding programs and day care, another lucrative market segment for Child Nutrition Programs.

Place

If we're serious about customer service, marketing place will get priority in our bid to capture more of the market. We'll concentrate on the older students because we lose market share somewhere around ninth grade, when they're about 15 years old, studies show.

What students want is fun, a fun place to eat. A dull, institutional-type cafeteria is not only no fun, it just isn't "cool." You don't attract kids that way. And unless "everybody" goes there, nobody will. You'll lose a substantial segment even of the free-and-reduced students, who may

Go for the Gold!

have no real alternative source of a good meal.

The first thing any school dining room needs is a name that sounds like a place where kids would hang out. Does "school dining room" sound cool to you?

Next, bright colors. Paint doesn't cost much. Awnings and neon signs work wonders.

More menu choices. Food variety is more important to senior high students than to little kids.

Then staff with an attitude—a customer service attitude. Our customers can spot them by the smiles on their faces.

Finally, short waits and quick service.

And we don't have to call our super service "pre-plated" meals to the customer's face.

We can use marketing names like Platter o' Planks for sandwiches cut in strips; Monkey Meal for salads; Bunny Box for a box lunch, or Feed Bag for a sack lunch.

Promotion

Just as customer service is both the most important and the most neglected part of school food service, promotion is both the most important and the most neglected part of marketing. Promotion makes customers aware of what we have to sell—our products and services.

Okay, we can't hire ad agencies to promote our product and our service. So we don't

have a huge budget for promotion. Granted, we're food specialists, not marketing specialists.

Now we've got all the excuses out of the way, let's get it done. It will be easier to plan if we break promotion into its component parts.

Advertising—that's paid media space and broadcast commercials. However, Child Nutrition Programs can get lots of public service space.

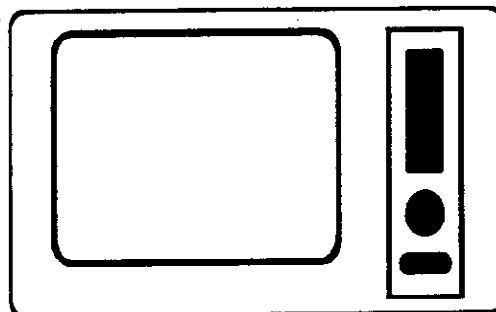
Publicity—that's news stories. Publicity is the best kind of promotion because the news columns and news broadcasts have better ratings than paid advertising. Most Child Nutrition Programs do some publicity, if it's only to publish menus. We can do lots more.

Public relations—that's how the public image evolves. Every program has a public image, like it or not. Changing our public image is a great opportunity often disguised as a problem.

Personal selling—the point at which the customer makes a decision. The server has more influence on customer choices than any other promotion.

Advertising

Advertising is space bought on billboards, in the advertising columns of our local newspapers, in commercials on radio and television.



.....
Changing our public image is a great opportunity often disguised as a problem.
.....

.....
Local television channels and radio are rarely tapped markets that often are willing to carry school menus as part of their regular programming.
.....

Don't forget direct marketing—those ads that come in the mail, come by phone, and are delivered in person.

Child Nutrition Programs may be able to get much of this same space donated. Some local programs got grants to buy time on cable cartoon programs. They put up billboards advertising school meals in space donated by the outdoor advertising company.

Kentucky produced a series of television public service announcements for statewide distribution; Kansas and Alabama developed point-of-sale materials for direct marketing. School districts in the Phoenix area formed a corporation that advertises school food service with funds donated by the vendors.

Advertising in the school newspaper doesn't cost much and pays off! Combine the ad with a cents-off coupon for a popular lunch item, and get ready for greater participation.

Most local newspapers, even metropolitan press like the *Washington Post*, print school menus. Sometimes the menus run as a paid advertisement sponsored by a local business. In that case, the school should reserve the right to control the copy to prevent exploitation. Local television channels and radio are rarely tapped markets that often are willing to carry school menus as part of their regular programming.

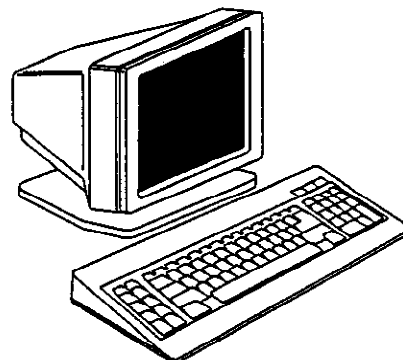
Meet the Press

Anyone who speaks to the press on behalf of school food service should be a skilled communicator who can get the right message to the right audience in the right way. Most school districts designate staff who are responsible for all media relations. Working with the media spokesperson is the safest way to get the best possible coverage.

Taking advantage of publicity opportunities is one of the easiest and most successful measures we can take to boost our program in all segments of the market.

The school menus are news because so many readers have children in school. Therefore, the local media generally are receptive.

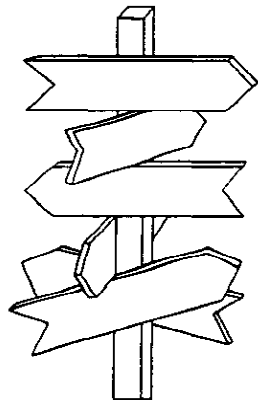
Most Child Nutrition Programs supply menus to the local newspapers, and most send menus home to the parents. Both methods of distributing menus offer an often-neglected opportunity to convey the healthy food message to parents and community. Including a nutritional analysis is one of the best ways to do that, for those districts that have a computer.



Go for the Gold!

We could include a short nutrition message, like an inspiration for the day. We could highlight a nutrient-of-the-week, and show how school meals meet the need for that nutrient.

Soft-sell nutrition education does have an impact. Americans are at a crossroads between what they know about nutrition and what they do about it. They need a signpost to steer them in the right direction.



Media, especially those in smaller communities, are short of staff and eager for stories. Positive publicity for our programs can minimize any negative impressions our customers may have from past less-than-favorable publicity.

Media usually want to take their own pictures. If we provide a fact kit, containing all the information for the story, we make the busy reporter's job easier. The school media spokesperson may want to provide media with a news release, already written.

Most reporters are fair and deserve honest answers. In case of a crisis, take the initiative and contact the press for a better outcome in the long run. Truth can stop rumors and gossip and reassure readers. Sincere concern for customers wins public confidence.

A few rules when dealing with the press:

- There is no such thing as "off the record." Don't tell it if we don't want it used.
- The story belongs to the writer. We have no right to demand to see it before it is printed or fuss about it after it is printed.
- Because we want good publicity, we have an obligation to spend as much time with the reporter as necessary.

Make friends with the press. Offer news and feature stories at every opportunity, and develop a good working relationship.

Public relations

Child Nutrition Programs have not had the greatest public image, but we can change that. We do have to get out of the kitchen and tell our story. The best public relations results come from actions, not reactions.

When we act in the public interest, we act in our own interest at the same time. When we serve the community in any way, we serve our program. This is public relations, one aspect of promotion. Combining PR with publicity lets the community know what we are doing for the public good. This is one way that the various kinds of promotion work together.

An example of good PR is the role schools and school food service play in disaster relief. How many people know that?

.....
**When we act
in the public
interest, we
act in our own
interest at the
same time.**
.....



The point is to do it and then tell it—combining public relations with publicity to promote our program.

School food service as a resource for community banquets is another example. When schools cater dinners for fund raising, awards, meetings, trips, or any community event, we raise the visibility of our programs and serve our own interests. We prevent competitive foods such as candy sales from hurting our participation, and we have a chance to build our reputation as skilled professionals.

The public needs to know about all the great things we do, such as aftercare food service, meals for the elderly, and day care catering. Those things are all good PR.

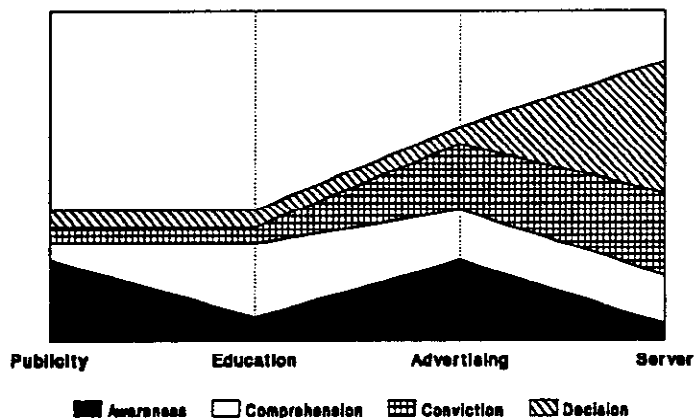
Personal selling

Personal selling is our last chance and our greatest opportunity to promote our product and service. Every employee who deals with customers has a promotion role in our marketing plan. They are the ones who, finally, convince the customer to

buy what we want to sell, healthy food choices.

Customers become aware of our product through our advertising and publicity, and those promotion efforts convince them that our product will meet their wants and needs. Through the nutrition education we have coordinated with the school curriculum, customers comprehend the value of healthy food choices. But the server is the major influence in their decision to go ahead and buy the product and service.

What influences customers during the buying cycle



.....
 ✓
Personal selling is our last chance and our greatest opportunity to promote our product and service.

Frances works in a small school serving all grades but where mostly elementary students eat in the cafeteria.

With two boys of her own, Frances knows that lecturing to 15-year-olds about what they "should do" won't work in this day and time. When the rowdy "in" crowd of ninth graders turns up, she is

Go for the Gold!

ninth graders turns up, she is really glad to see them and shows it.

"Hi guys," Frances says. "Boy, do you look hungry! You're going for extras today, I'll bet. We have a two-for-one special, so you can have two salads, two vegetables, or one of each, for the price of one. What's your choice?"

Frances made the whole sales pitch in a few seconds. Her customers came to the dining room because they were already aware of the product and service. What Frances needed to do was get the order:

- Bring the customer's attention to the best choices.
- Direct the customer's interest to the foods we want to promote.
- Stimulate desire for that food.
- Ask to take the order.

No kind of promotion will work, of course, unless the other marketing Ps are there, too. The product must be consistently good, the place pleasant, and the price right.

Sample promotion plan

Now that we know all about marketing, it's time to get started. The best way to begin is with a marketing plan.

The elements for any marketing plan:

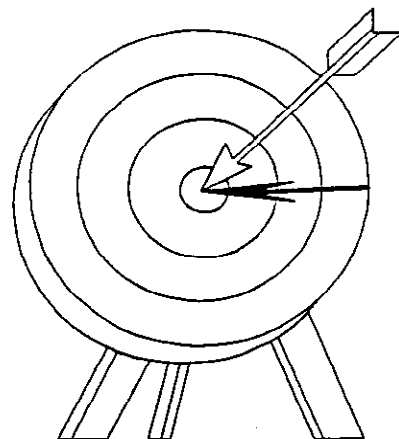
- Identify the customer.
- Define needs.
- List expected outcomes.
- Decide who will be involved.
- Set objectives and activities.
- Specify time line.
- Evaluate of results.

The customer: We must know our target audience first. Child Nutrition Programs should market to all customers and all those who influence them, but any given promotion will target specific customers or groups of customers. Most of our advertising will target those who eat in the school dining room. Our publicity is directed at parents, primarily. Public relations efforts affect our image in the whole community.

Needs: We can identify needs by observation. Is the promotion directed at boosting participation? Do we want to overcome some negative impressions? Are we going to convince parents that school meals are a good value? Are we going to convince teachers that the students will do better in class if they have a good meal? The promotion methods we use will depend on the needs and wants of the customers toward whom the promotion is directed.

Outcomes: The promotion projects a stated, successful outcome.

.....
The product must be consistently good, the place pleasant, and the price right.
.....



.....
**In the final
analysis, we
can boost
participation
if the world
knows we do a
good job.**
.....

The stated outcome should be addressed in terms of identified need.

Who will be involved: Involvement depends on which of the marketing/and or promotion methods we will use. If we decide the need is to market place; e.g., decorating the cafeteria, the school maintenance staff may be primary. A need to compete with food from home might be accomplished with direct marketing flyers to parents produced by a journalism class.

Objectives/activities: Objectives are what we expect to accomplish. Activities are the actual methodology, the promotion tools that will be used to accomplish the objectives, in detail.

Time line: A realistic evaluation of how long it will take to bring off the promotion, on time and within budget, with specific dates. Each activity might have

its own time line. All staff members involved must understand what they will do to stay on time.

Evaluation: How do we know if the promotion worked? We need to know to plan future promotions. Methods of evaluating are based on objectives and should be specific, measurable, and time limited. If we want to boost breakfast participation, for example, an evaluation might be:

During the promotion, 10 percent more students will participate in school breakfast, and five percent more will still be participating within four weeks after the promotion.

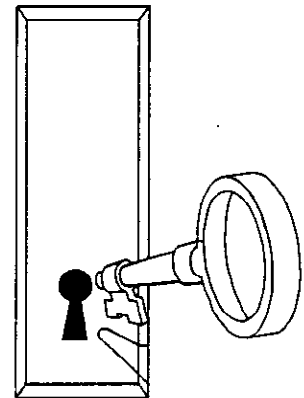
In the final analysis, we can boost participation if the world knows we do a good job. Promotion makes our customers aware and brings them in. If our price is right, our place is attractive, and our product is wonderful, they will keep coming back. That's what makes winners.

Go for the Gold!



The Record Book

Summary and Glossary



Key words from every chapter are arranged alphabetically. The key words and their definitions summarize the concepts in this manual.

Adults - Employees who want to know why they are learning something

Advertising - Space in newspapers, on billboards, and on broadcast media that is for sale

After school care - Another opportunity for schools to serve latchkey kids

Application - A burden or a blessing, depending on experience during the process

Appreciation - A motivational use of communication

Atmosphere - First step in training staff for challenge of change

Best - What parents want for their families

Body language - Nonverbal communication; accounts for 55% of message impact

Boosters - Our fans; parents, community, school administration

Change - Alters usual way of doing things; often leads to victory; leaders must start

Child Nutrition Programs - 1) A "value added service in education and health;" 2) A vital part of the educational system

Child Nutrition markets - The gold links in our marketing chain; those customers who eat in the school dining room and those who influence them



Go for the Gold!

Clarity - A characteristic of a good staff developer

Climate - Atmosphere, environment, created by the way people treat each other and customers

Coach - What supervisors become in workteam concept; ant.: boss

Commitment - Personal choice to strive

Communication - 1) Getting ideas from one mind into another; 2) talking, writing, using pictures to express ideas

Competence - Working hard to achieve

Competitive - Satisfying customer wants and needs

Competitors - School stores and snack bars, vending machines, vending trucks, a la carte meals, lunch from home, off-campus businesses

Complaint - What we need to know

Complaints - Opportunities disguised as problems

Concentrate - How we become better listeners

Continuing education - On going process that prepares us for change; lifelong learning

Convenience - What modern parents need

Criticism - Rarely effective use of communication

Cross-training - Continuous learning that develops employees with multiple skills

Customer satisfaction - 1) Our job; 2) Supplying the customers' wants and needs

Customer service - Our goal!
The key to customer satisfaction; our opportunity to boost participation; an attitude

Customer feedback - Asking the ones who matter most:
1) Interviews - Asking face-to-face
2) Focus groups - Asking and recording in organized groups
3) Surveys - Written comments

Customers - Those who eat in the school dining room, the active players

Cycle - The whole bundle of customers' experiences in the Child Nutrition Program

Day care - A community service opportunity for Child Nutrition programs

Dedication - Persistence; the one thing that all winners have in common

Direct mail - Flyers mailed or hand-delivered; menus sent home to parents

Distraction - The main barrier to good listening

Efficient - The kind of employee managers prefer

Empathy - A characteristic of a good staff developer

Employee feedback - Ask the troops on the front lines

Enthusiasm - A characteristic of a good instructor

Evaluation - How we know what our marketing accomplished

Example - How the supervisor teaches spirit and attitude to staff

Excuses - What we are thinking of when we should be listening

Expertise - A characteristic of a good staff developer

Feedback - Best way to assure message got through

Flow - The way a job progresses

Focus - The way to overcome distraction

Followers - Those who trust leaders

Fun - What students want; contests, games, prizes, celebrations

Good schools - What communities want

Health - What parents worry about

Helpful - The kind of server customers prefer

Involvement - Participation by all employees; the most important factor in workteam success

Job dissatisfaction - Poor pay, benefits, security

Job satisfaction - Motivational factors

Laboratory - Where students learn to apply nutrition theory; school food service

Leaders - Someone who has followers

Go for the Gold!

Leadership - 1) An attitude, starts at the top; 2) doing the right things

Learners - What teachers want

Leverage - Concerned principals, teachers, parents; our strongest allies

Line - Where we have our best opportunity for success

Listen - The first (possibly the most important) tool of communication

Management - Doing things right

Management functions - Skills managers need, including:
Planning - Observing needs and developing goals and strategies

Controlling - Revising and correcting to achieve goals

Organizing - Knowing and implementing the organization structure

Staffing - Recruiting, training, and retaining qualified employees

Directing - Getting the job done

Marketing - 1) Selling our product and our service; 2) expanding market share for a business; 3) total activity undertaken to make customers want to have our product or service

MBWA - Management by walking around

Media - Mouthpiece of the community; influence the influential

Menu - Customers' first contact point

Mirrors - What they see is what we get back

Mission - The purpose or reason for being

Moment of Truth - Feedback, a complaint or a compliment

News release - A pre-written news story

Nonverbal communication -
Body language

Nutrition - 1) What students need; Child Nutrition Programs' unique marketing advantage

Nutritious meals - Our goal, which makes Child Nutrition Programs unique among food service establishments

Outcome - What our marketing accomplishes

People skills - They don't cost; they pay

Performance - Result of supervisor's communicated expectations

Personal dimension - Creating a happy environment

Personal Best - Doing better than you thought you could

Personal selling - What the server does and says at the point of sale; the most effective marketing technique

Place - Third P of marketing; make it "cool," and they will come

Practice - The practical part of training; hands-on, reinforces learning

Price - Second P of marketing, suggests a marketing opportunity

Priorities - Clear focus

Procedural dimension - Getting acceptance for healthy foods

Product - First P of marketing; ours is better than competitors

Productivity - Coaching includes work simplification, developing more efficient flow of work

Promoting - What we do to increase market share

Promotion - 1) the marketing P that makes customers aware that our product and service are what they want and need; 2) an event to increase interest in our product and service

Public image - 1) An opportunity often disguised as a problem; 2) respect that we earn

Public relations - Community activities that affect our public image

Publicity - News stories in print and broadcast media; menus published in local papers

Repetition - Reinforces training

Response - What we are planning when we should be listening

Self study - Qualities that employees perceive as important to their work

Self-assessment - Lets trainer and trainee know whether the training achieved its objective

Service audit - Rating service by walking around

Service - Source of most customer complaints, as well as compliments, in food service

Go for the Gold!

Show - Demonstrate; learners retain 30% of what they see

Solutions - Opposite of excuses; solutions begin where the buck stops

Special needs children - Another opportunity for Child Nutrition to serve

Spirit - An attitude, one that communicates itself to customer; service

Staff - Management's best resource for solutions to problems

Strategies - Goals, plans, and actions to accomplish a mission

Success - What administration wants

Success - Treating customers as we would like to be treated

Summer feeding programs - Another opportunity for Child Nutrition to serve low-income children

SWOT - A situational evaluation technique that analyzes Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

T-chart - Tasks and actions that improve service

Task priorities - How managers rate skills needed to do their jobs

Teamwork - What administration needs; how Child Nutrition improves their programs.

Tell - Directions; learners retain 20% of what they read and hear

Theory - Only part of training

Tone - Voice sound; accounts for 38% of message impact

Traditional - Supervisory style where manager gives the orders; employees follow orders

Training - Means to an end; link to better things

Trust - Eliminates mental filters to communication

Understand - A main goal of communication

Use - Practical application of acquired skill

Value - What all parents need

Victory - Customer service and satisfaction; growing participation, cooperative teachers, happy principals, supportive parents, and community advocates

Vision - An ideal to strive for

Visual learners - Learn best by demonstration; people who work with their hands

Why - What adult learners want to know before they begin to learn

Winning - Boosting participation

Words - What we use to talk and write ideas; account for 7% of impact of message

Workteam - Winners who get the job done most efficiently; a trusting work relationship; participatory management

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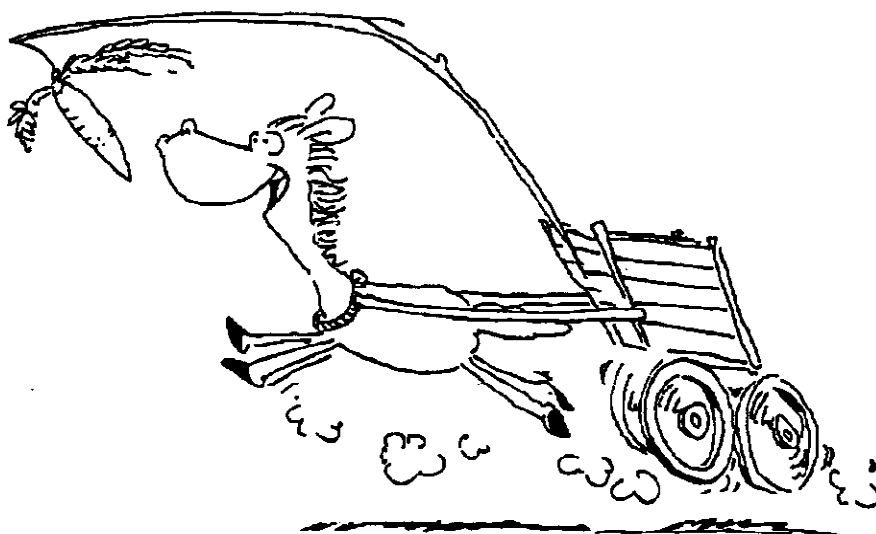
World Class Taste

Lesson 1

Go For The Gold With Customer Service

National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi



Lesson 1

World Class Taste

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, food service assistants will be able to do the following:

- Define "food quality."
- List the attributes that contribute to food quality.
- Rate food products according to established standards of quality.
- Develop a simple product evaluation form to test quality of a food product.
- Choose proper techniques for handling and preparing foods to produce best quality.

**To the
instructor**



For this segment, you will need:

A chalk board or flip chart

Food products with nutrition labels

Red and green (Granny Smith) apples, cutting board, knife

Copies of T-chart for everyone in class (page 16)

Nice to have:

Bed linen (muslin and percale) with thread count labels

A microwave oven instruction book or owner's manual

Segment 1 - Defining "good"

"It's got to taste good!"
When 313 students from every grade level were asked what was most important in their decision to eat in the school cafeteria, most of them said "How the food tastes."

"Food choices offered" was a distant second. Other reasons, such as how the food looks and where their friends eat, mattered to only a tiny minority.

- If we want more customers to come to our cafeteria,
- If we want them to like the food we prepare,
- If we want them to want to come back every day,

Then what should we do?
How are we going to make that happen?

The students gave us the answer—we work on food quality. When we supply what the customer wants, we will have all the customers we want—which is all the customers in the school!

Before we can serve what they want, we have to know what our customers call "good." We will need some measure for evaluating the foods we serve. Then we can work on how we produce that so-called "good" food, the product of the highest possible quality.

Today we will talk about food quality, what makes food "taste good." Later we will talk about how can we actually measure food quality. We'll practice evaluating food by those certain standards. We'll talk about

handling and preparation techniques that produce the highest quality food, the kind that we all want to serve.

How would you define "quality?"

(Pause. Wait 10 seconds, look around.)

Not necessarily food quality, because that may take a little thought, but just define the word "quality?" Anyone?

(If no one volunteers call on someone by name, then another. Get at least three or four different synonyms for "quality.")

Okay, how do we apply these definitions of "quality" to food? When the customers really like it? When the customers ask us to serve it again—would that be quality?

Popularity with customers is not quite the same thing as quality. We might serve the finest truffle quiche the world has ever known, but how many students would be pleased?

When students say, "It has to taste good," two elements are involved. Our customers want the kind of food that is popular with them. They also want that particular food to have a high degree of quality.

We can define "food quality," as food that is highly acceptable when compared to foods of that same kind. We judge a food item by the standards of what makes that particular food item excellent.



We can establish standards for any food item we serve, based on what that item should be.

Let's review terms, as used in this lesson:

Food **quality** is a measure of its acceptability to our customers.

Food **standard** is a measure of its **quality**.

Take a look at some standards of quality in products people buy:

Bed linen is one example. We look for the thread count on the label. If the sheet has 185 threads to the inch we call it "muslin." If the sheet has 212 threads to the inch, we call it percale. Which is better?

(Signal the whole class to answer and wait.)

The **standard** by which we judge sheets is the thread count. The highest **quality** sheet is the one with the most threads, the percale.

(Optional - Pass around muslin and percale sheets)

Can you think of another?

(Pause. Wait 10 seconds, restate the question: Can anyone think of another example? If no answer, go on to another example.)

How about processed food?

(Show food packages with nutrition labels.)



You would read the label to find out if this food has the nutrient content you want. If you wanted a low-fat food, or a food high in iron, which would you pick?

Microwave ovens – What are some of the standards? What about the size?

(Call on someone by name. Solicit answers such as wattage, size, turntable.)

Standards for determining the quality of these items are physical measurements. They are exact. We call such standards "**objective**" because they can be measured physically. We know exactly what we are buying when there is an objective standard for the item's quality

A **subjective** standard is another gauge by which we judge a product. A subjective standard cannot be measured. These are standards based on personal preference.

Let's go back to our original example. When we serve a food item that the students ask us to serve again, did they like it because of its quality (based on objective measures) or because of personal preference? Both standards, both objective and subjective judgments, are involved in whether our customers are pleased with a food product.

Activity - Cut up the red delicious apple and a green Granny Smith apple. Ask the class which they prefer. Ask why. Distribute T-chart handout to each class member.)



Under each heading list the characteristics that class members give for the apple they prefer. Then cut up the apples and pass the samples around. Add to the list of standards. Make sure every class member states a preference and at least one reason (standard). Then ask the class to classify each standard as an subjective or an objective measure.

When it comes to food, the line between subjective and objective measurements is a fine line, isn't it?

We judge food by our senses: Sight, smell, taste, feel—

yes, even sound sometimes, as when we bite into a crisp apple and hear the crunching sound. We see and smell the apple, taste it, then become aware of the mouthfeel or texture of the apple.

Children rate school food subjectively, by whether they like it or not. When they say, "It has to taste good," they are really talking about how the food appeals to all their senses. We can establish standards of quality for food, based on our senses, just as we set standards of quality for sheets or microwaves.

Segment 2 - Quality Standards

Review Segment 1 briefly: What customers want, define standard and quality, subjective and objective.

We do have some measurable—that is, objective—standards by which we can measure a food product, or at least compare it to a food product of the same kind. Some of these objective standards are written into the specifications on our purchase bids.

For example, the fat content of ground beef or the grade and quality of canned fruits and vegetables. We set a standard so that we can require the bidder to provide a quality product.

What are some of the other standards that reflect food quality?

(Pause, restate question and call on someone by name. Write responses on a chalk board, flip chart, or transparency. Go around the class until the list is long enough.)

Let's see if we can group these standards into general headings.

(Write the following on a transparency, or flip chart.)

Appearance
Aroma
Flavor
Texture

When the customers say, "It has to taste good," they're usually talking about all four standards. The food appeals to all their senses. They "eat" it with their eyes first, then they "taste" it with their noses, then get the flavor and texture with their mouths. If any one of those sensory evaluations is not top quality, up to the standard that the customer expects, that's an unhappy customer who isn't likely to come back.

Appearance - We look at size and shape—some people pick the biggest piece, some are turned off by huge pieces—and such appearance characteristics as transparency (gel), cloudiness (iced tea), dullness or gloss. What foods do we want to be shiny? What foods should not be shiny?

Color is one of the most important visual characteristics. Color has an enormous influence on how a food "tastes." Imagine green ice cream that tastes like cinnamon.

To the instructor



For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

2 samples of mashed potatoes, one colored yellow and one pink

Blindfolds

Raw potato and raw apple, cutting board and knife

Nice to have:

Samples of gel, iced tea, bananas, cake and bread to show

Food models, if available

Activity - Prepare two samples of mashed potatoes. Color one sample bright yellow and mound it in a dessert dish. Color one sample pink and make it into a round ball. Show both samples to the class and ask them to identify each food. Tell them that both samples are mashed potatoes and ask if it would be a good idea to serve mashed potatoes in those colors and forms to the customers. Wait for the class to answer. Then ask individual class members Why or why not?

Would our customers accept such food products? How about gray hamburgers? Do they have the same flavor as brown hamburgers?

(Pause. Wait for class answers.)

Probably gray hamburgers taste the same as browned ones, but they don't look "flavorful." They don't meet our color standard for quality hamburgers.

Think about red hot dogs and orange cheese. Who decided to put food coloring in those products? And what happens when the processors take the coloring out of those foods?

Color tells our eyes about fruit quality, whether fruits such as bananas and strawberries are ripe. We judge the strength of coffee by the color. So can we identify the color we want in a food item and make that one of the standards on which we judge the quality of food?

(Set up the following menus with food models, if available)

Visualize these three menus in your mind's eye: Baked fish, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, ice cream and milk.

Now this - Spaghetti, beets, tomato salad, cherry cobbler, and milk.

Now this: Roast beef, mashed potatoes, carrots, fresh grapes and milk. Doesn't matter much what color grapes, would it?

Which menu would have the best taste? Why?

Aroma - Smell has two parts, the aroma or odor of the food before you take the first bite, and the odor that affects taste. Before we ever take the first bite, we smell the food product.

The aroma our customers get must be good or they won't ever taste the food. For that reason, we vent off stale odors and keep the good odors.

We like the smell of bread baking and of spices and herbs. We like the way gingerbread and spaghetti smell. We like the smell of onions frying, but we hate stale onion smell or stale cabbage smell. We must be careful to vent off the old stale smells and keep the smells that customers perceive as "good."

Flavor - Taste has three components - odor, flavor, and mouthfeel, which includes texture.



You know the importance of smell by how food tastes (or doesn't taste) when you have a cold. Nothing is wrong with your mouth when you have a cold, but your nose isn't working.

Odor can also give us a sense of freshness, as with fish. A fishy smell, before or after the fish is cooked, is disgusting and certainly indicates the fish wasn't fresh; that is, it's poor quality.

Taste is registered by the taste buds in the mouth. The tongue has taste buds that detect only four "tastes"—sweet, salty, sour, and bitter—from the front of the tongue to the back. That's all the taste we get from the tongue. Rather than say a food "tastes" good, it would be more accurate to say it "smells" good.

Mouthfeel - includes texture, astringency, and consistency. These also are taste standards by which we can judge food quality.

Activity - Blindfold two to four volunteers and have them taste, in turn, a chunk of raw potato and a chunk of raw apple. Ask each to describe for the class the texture, the consistency, and the mouthfeel. Take off the blindfolds and ask them to write down what they ate. Was anyone unable to correctly identify each food?

Texture - Characteristics like grainy, crisp or crunchy,

chewy, creamy, tender are standards of food quality. We want any given food to have those characteristics we associate with that particular food. We want creamy ice cream; we don't want grainy ice cream. We appreciate firm spaghetti, we don't want it soft. Some cultures prefer gummy rice, but we work hard to keep each grain separate. Texture is a standard by which we judge food quality. We establish a texture standard that we expect in a quality product.

Astringency refers to the puckery sensation we get from certain foods. We enjoy astringency in some foods but not in others. We enjoy astringent sorbet but we want velvety ice cream. We like puckery fruits and yogurt, but we don't want that in our mayonnaise. We want a slick mouthfeel. Therefore, when we use yogurt to replace part of the mayonnaise in low-fat salads, we must be careful to preserve the slick mayonnaise mouthfeel. Again, when we judge a food product, we set the standard for that product that reflects the quality we want in that particular food.

Consistency - The four primary characteristics are hard, cohesive, viscous, and elastic. There are many secondary characteristics, such as brittle, chewy, gummy. A raw vegetable is hard and should also be brittle, crisp, crunchy. A hard cookie might be crisp (a good standard) or tough (bad).

A soft cookie might be crumbly or chewy, and our standard for judging the quality of that cookie depends on what we want it to be. The textures of toast and pie crust, both of which are hard, are quite different, so we would set a different standard for each to judge food quality.

Crumb also is a characteristic of texture, different for each baked product. We expect a relatively coarse texture in breads, but a finer texture in cakes, so the standard by which we judge texture quality of bread is different from our standard for cake.

Does texture influence flavor?

(Pause for class to answer.)

Yes, it does. Think about the taste of tomato juice as compared to aspic. The flavor of aspic is milder, right? The exact same food has a stronger flavor when it is a liquid than when it is

more viscous or more solid. Melted ice cream is sickeningly sweet, compared to the milder flavor of frozen ice cream.

In the next segment, we will evaluate a food product, based on established standards for quality in that food product. Then we will make a score card for one food product, setting our own standards of quality as it appeals to our senses, based on some or all of the following quality standards:

Appearance

Aroma

Taste

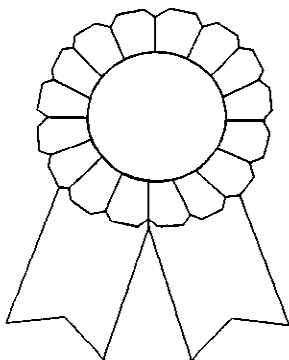
Texture

These activities will show us how to develop standards by which we can judge our own food quality. When we serve quality, we can deliver customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is why we're here, and customer satisfaction gives us all an extra measure of job satisfaction.



Segment 3 - Evaluating samples

(Briefly review previous lesson.)



We judge food quality on certain standards that are specific for that food item. Evaluating the quality of the food we serve requires a working knowledge of food standards and general agreement of the standards we want, to produce the quality we expect.

Now we are going to learn how to judge food items we prepare, to assure that we serve the best possible meals so our customers will be satisfied and want to buy our product and service.

Appearance - size and shape, transparency or cloudiness, dullness or gloss, and color

Aroma - the way the food smells before we taste it, and the odor that is part of taste

Taste - odor, the four tongue tastes, and mouthfeel

Texture - hard, cohesive, viscous, and elastic

For the first part of this activity, we will judge pizza, using the standards that have been set for pizza.

(Reproduce scorecard for pizza and give copies to each employee. Discuss

the standards set for pizza quality on scorecard. Ask class members if they agree with standards.)

Appearance -

Size and Shape - Pic-shape or square shape. We must use the shape that is the standard for our school. Pic-shape was the standard, but may be changing. The highly-advertised big pizzas cut in squares may cause square pieces to become the standard for pizza shape.

Size - Thickness of pizza crust: the standard for quality depends on preference, thick or thin.

The size of the piece, the meal component standard.

Color - Crust should be evenly browned, not burned. Top should be evenly covered with sauce and cheese, cheese melted but not brown, no grease showing. Glossy, not dull.

Aroma - Smell of bread baking.

Taste - Mild bread flavor, mild cheese flavor, sauce blend of spice and mild tomato, no flavor dominant or overpowering.

Texture - Crust may be crisp or chewy but not soggy or gummy. Cheese is soft, stringy but not leathery or tough.

To the
instructor



For this segment you will need:

Copies of pizza and peach scorecards for each person (pages 17 and 18)

Large reproductions of scorecards on board or flip chart

Three different pizza samples

Two canned peach samples

Sample trays

Scoring - We will score each pizza as acceptable or unacceptable, giving each standard a rating of 1 or 0, for an overall quality numerical score from 0 to 7.

Duplicate score cards and make a larger version—either a poster-sized reproduction, a transparency, or reproduce score cards on a chalk board. Prepare three different samples of cheese pizza: Bake one according to package directions; bake one 10 minutes longer than directions; bake one ahead and leave in warmer for one hour before serving. Divide class into groups of four or less for product evaluation. Prepare sample trays for each work group, each tray containing three slices of pizza, one from each of the three samples. Give each group one tray and three score cards. Ask the groups to name one person as scorekeeper, then rate each sample and add their totals. Gather the score cards and write totals on the board. Get spokespersons to explain group scores. Ask if any additional standards are needed. Could any be eliminated? Get two samples, different brands and qualities, of sliced canned peaches. Prepare trays with two samples. Have groups develop a

scorecard for sliced canned peaches, then rate the samples, as above. Gather score cards and write on the large version the standards from each card. Then write the scores and have spokespersons discuss. Ask whole group to discuss standards and scores for canned sliced peaches.

Explain that not all foods are rated by every standard. Milk, for example, would be rated on odor and flavor, not on texture or appearance.

At the end of this segment, ask the class:

Has this activity helped you select standards for judging quality food?

Could you develop a product evaluation scorecard for a food item we serve?

What are some of the reasons we might want to do that?

Extended study:

Try making 1) pizza from scratch, 2) pizza from frozen dough.

Compare to commercial pizza.



Segment 4 - Handling and preparation

(Briefly review the previous segment)

We learned how to use established standards to judge food quality. What were those established standards?

(Get the whole class to participate, and write on chalk board, flip chart, or transparency.)

Thus, we learned how to establish standards for quality when we want to judge one of the food items we serve. What were some of the reasons we might want to judge our own food?

(Wait for responses. Call on class members by name if no volunteers.)

We set these standards to make sure our food is of the quality we can be proud to serve. What if it scores low? **The only thing we can do then is avoid a second mistake by serving it.** When we have a product we aren't proud to serve, we do not serve it or we will lose customers.

Let's talk about what we can do to achieve those standards of food quality that will assure customer satisfaction.

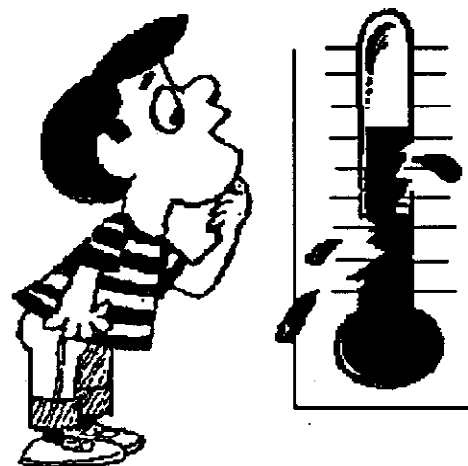
- Use standardized recipes.
- Use the best ingredients.

- Follow the recipe or directions on the package exactly.
- Make the dish look attractive.
- Serve it on time.
- Serve at the right temperature.

One of the standards we haven't mentioned yet is temperature. We all know foods should be served at the proper temperature:

- Hot foods served piping hot.
- Cold foods served nicely chilled.
- Frozen foods neither be rock hard nor melting, just frozen.

Extremely hot or cold foods inflict a kind of pleasurable pain that actually contributes to the flavor of that food.



To the instructor



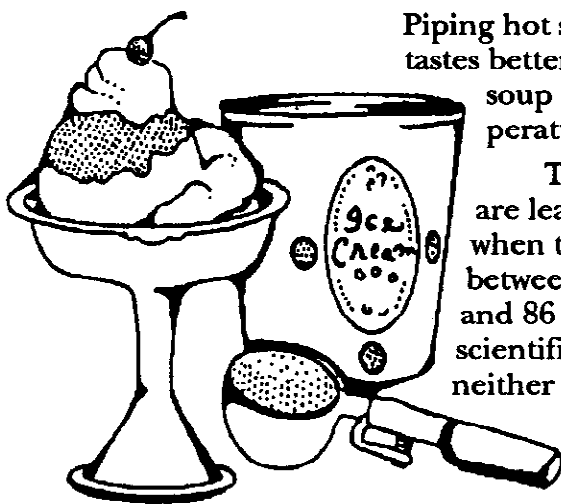
For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart
Small cups or dishes, spoons
Melted ice cream

Room temperature coffee

Ice cream that has been softened and re-frozen

Temperature handout (page 20)



Piping hot soup definitely tastes better than same soup at room temperature, agreed?

Taste sensations are least intense when the food is between 68 degrees and 86 degrees. It's a scientific fact that neither hot or cold food tastes as good at room temperature.

Hot coffee is less bitter than coffee that has cooled off.

Melted ice cream tastes sickeningly sweet, even though it tasted fine when it was frozen.

Activity - Bring in some melted ice cream and some room temperature coffee for everyone to taste.

Therefore, one of the objective standards we can use for judging food quality is temperature. Hot foods should be served at about 140-165 degrees. Cold foods should be below 45 degrees, frozen foods at about 25 degrees. We have the proper equipment to hold foods at the proper temperatures, so we are without excuse if our food is not up to the temperature standard or quality. Note danger zone 40 to 140 degrees.

Proper temperature for quality food begins from the moment we receive and store the food order. The best food quality starts with the best ingredients. No matter how good the chef, we can't turn bad raw

materials into quality food products.

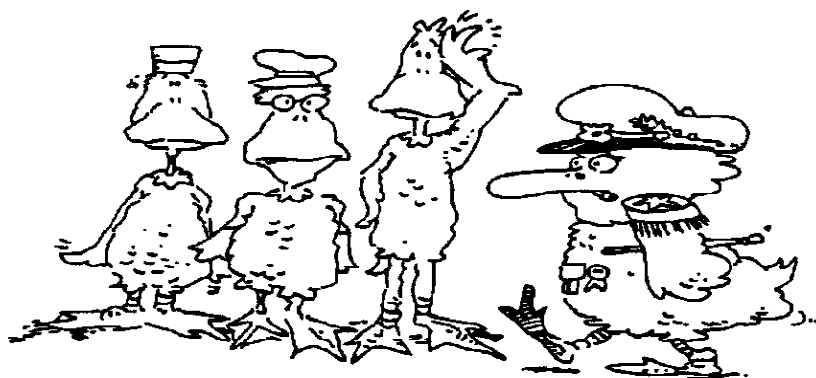
Look at the fresh vegetables when they are delivered; make sure they are the quality ordered, then refrigerate immediately. Check the frozen foods to make sure they are solidly frozen when delivered; then store them in the freezer quickly. We said in the Segment 2 that we don't want grainy ice cream; well, ice cream gets grainy if it gets soft and then freezes again.

Activity - Let some ice cream melt to mushy stage, then refreeze. Give everyone a sample.

Store raw materials and processed foods to keep them in the best possible condition until they are cooked. After they are cooked, hold the food at the right serving temperature.

Food preparation - In this day and time, anyone who can read and is willing to follow directions can cook. We want a quality product—a food item that meets our standards for food quality every time we prepare it. The recipes we use are carefully tested to produce exactly the same results every time we use them—if we follow them exactly. Processed foods should come up to the standards we expect for a quality product if we follow the instructions on the package exactly.

Notice the conditions: We follow instructions exactly. We don't try to hurry the product by baking at a higher temperature.



Nor do we leave it in the oven longer because we aren't ready to serve yet.

Yes, we do have to plan ahead. We need to know the preparation time for each food item so that we can follow directions exactly and have the product ready to serve when we are ready to serve it.

That's called "getting our ducks in a row." It does take a little experience.

Batch cooking keeps holding time to a minimum and produces a quality product. Very few foods improve with holding. Most foods quickly deteriorate. Batch cooking means we continuously cook in small quantities so that no food ever sits on

the steam table for 30 minutes—15 to 20 minutes should be our standard. x

(The group may want to discuss food items that hold well and those that don't)

Ideally, we'd cook vegetables in five-pound lots for short cooking time and best quality. Breaded meats should come on the line and be gone while the coating is still crisp and hot.

Batch cooking may require adjustments in recipe quantities. Most recipes are planned to serve 50 or 100, which should be ideal for batch cooking. However, if recipe adjustment becomes necessary to produce the proper quantity, that adjustment, too, must be exact so that the food comes up to the standard that we set for the quality of that food item.

Pass out handout on proper storage and serving temps. Give a crossword puzzle to each employee. Ask them to complete it on their own. Give them the key the next day.



Accompanying Materials

The following materials are available from NFSMI to supplement this lesson:

On the Road to Professional Food Preparation includes four lessons and a demonstration video. The video is designed to reinforce information included in the lessons by showing actual examples from the lessons. It may be used at the beginning of the training program as an overview or at the end of the training program as a review or summary. Also includes a poster for the kitchen with important weights and measures.

ET5-93 and ET5-93 (A)
Poster

Staff Development Skills for Networking. A series of one hour lesson plans for food service staff development. Includes 15 lessons to be taught in one-hour segments. Topics include: Introduction to staff development, Food Safety, Sanitation, Teamwork, Work Simplification, Menu Planning, Nutrition, and Food Preparation.

ET3-92

Satellite teleconference/seminar videotapes are approximately one hour each. Each tape may be purchased alone or with the accompanying handout material that was distributed at satellite teleconference/seminar sites. The ones recommended to be used as background to this lesson:

1) ***Dietary Guidelines: in Your Hands*** is designed for child nutrition personnel and school building principals. It offers both positive and practical suggestions to help implement the Dietary Guidelines through menu planning and partnerships.

NFSMITT 042002

2) ***Preparation and the Dietary Guidelines*** features an internationally-trained chef who illustrates preparation of three common school lunch entrees to cut the percentage of calories from fat. Good tips on equipment and preparation tips.

NFSMITT 092392



Lesson 1 - World Class Taste

Handouts

Review Puzzle



Lesson 1, Segment 1

T-chart for comparing apples

Red delicious	Green Granny Smith



Pizza Quality Score Card



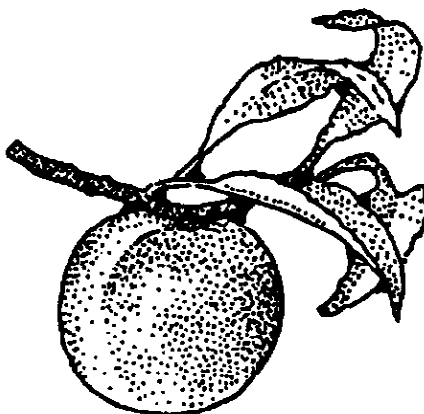
Standards	Acceptable= 1	Unacceptable =0
Appearance, Size and Shape Pie-shape or square		
Size , crust $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick		
Color Evenly browned, not burned		
Top evenly covered with sauce and cheese, cheese melted but not brown, no grease showing. Glossy, not dull.		
Aroma Smell of fresh bread, spicy, tomato		
Flavor Mild bread flavor, mild cheese flavor, sauce blend of spice and mild tomato, no flavor dominant or overpowering		
Texture Crust crisp or chewy but not soggy or gummy. Cheese soft and stringy but not leathery or tough		
Total		





Peach Quality Score Card

Standards	Acceptable=1	Unacceptable=0
Appearance Shape		
Size		
Color		
Other appearance (glossy, dull, translucent, etc.)		
Aroma		
Flavor		
Texture		
Total		



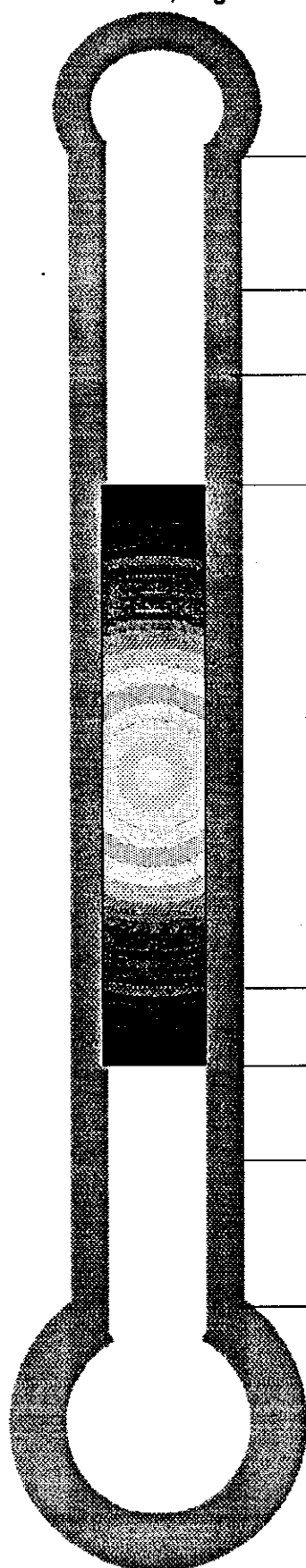
Sample Score Card



Food item _____

Appearance	Acceptable	Not acceptable
Aroma		
Flavor and Texture		

Temperature Chart



212° boiling point

180° dishwasher rinse

140-165° serve hot foods

140° minimum for hot foods

Danger!

50-75° dry storage

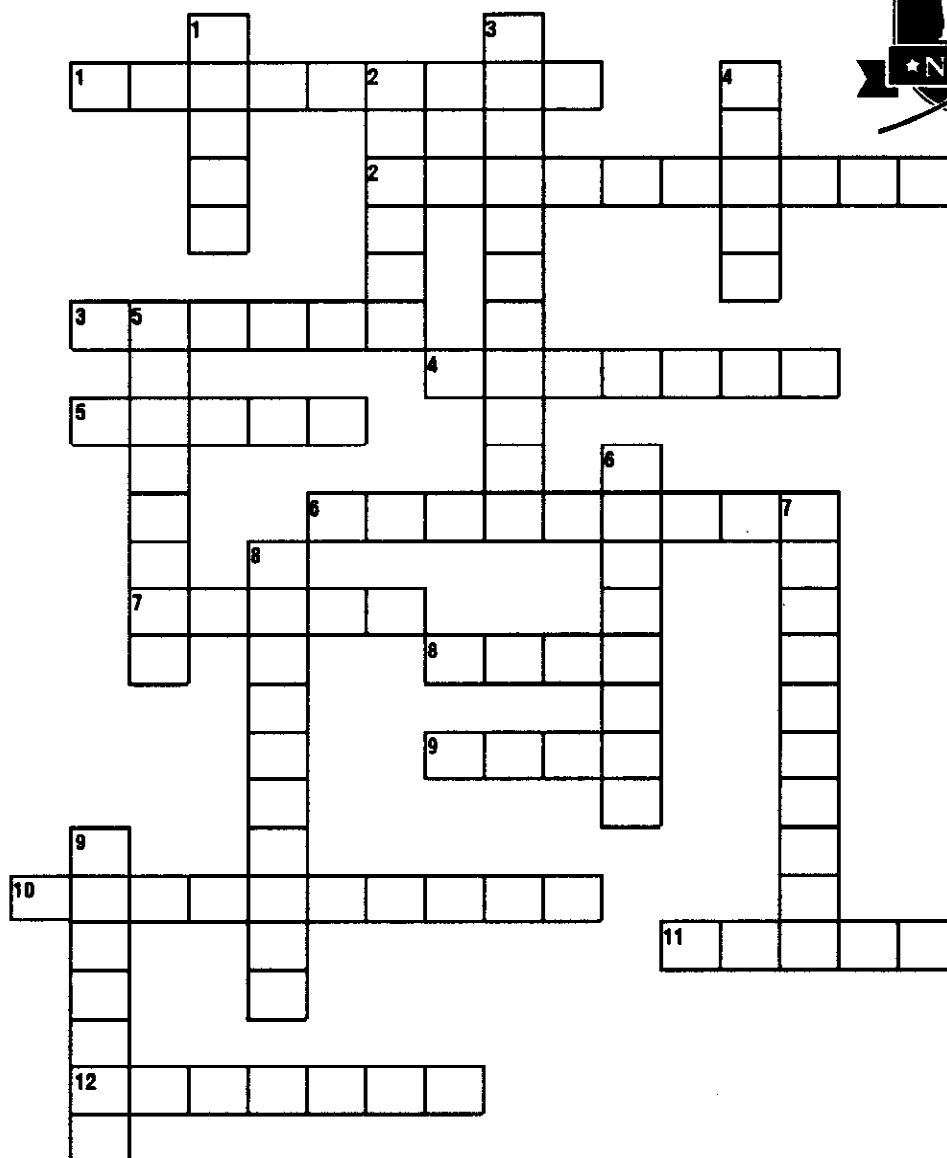
40° maximum for cold foods

25° serving temperature
for frozen foods

0° freezer temperature



Review puzzle - Lesson 1



Review Puzzle - Lesson 1 Definitions

Down

1. What we use standards for
2. The most important quality standard to students
3. A serving quality standard
3. One of the appearance standards of quality
5. How we judge quality
6. A measure of quality
7. The standard for which we strive
8. Puckery mouthfeel
9. What standards evaluate

Across

1. A texture characteristic
2. A quality standard
3. A texture standard
4. Affects ingredient quality
5. Ideal cooking standard
6. Evaluation not by personal preference
7. One of the flavor standards
8. A standard for all products
9. Important to flavor
10. Evaluation by personal preference
11. A standard for viscous texture
12. One of the mouthfeel standards

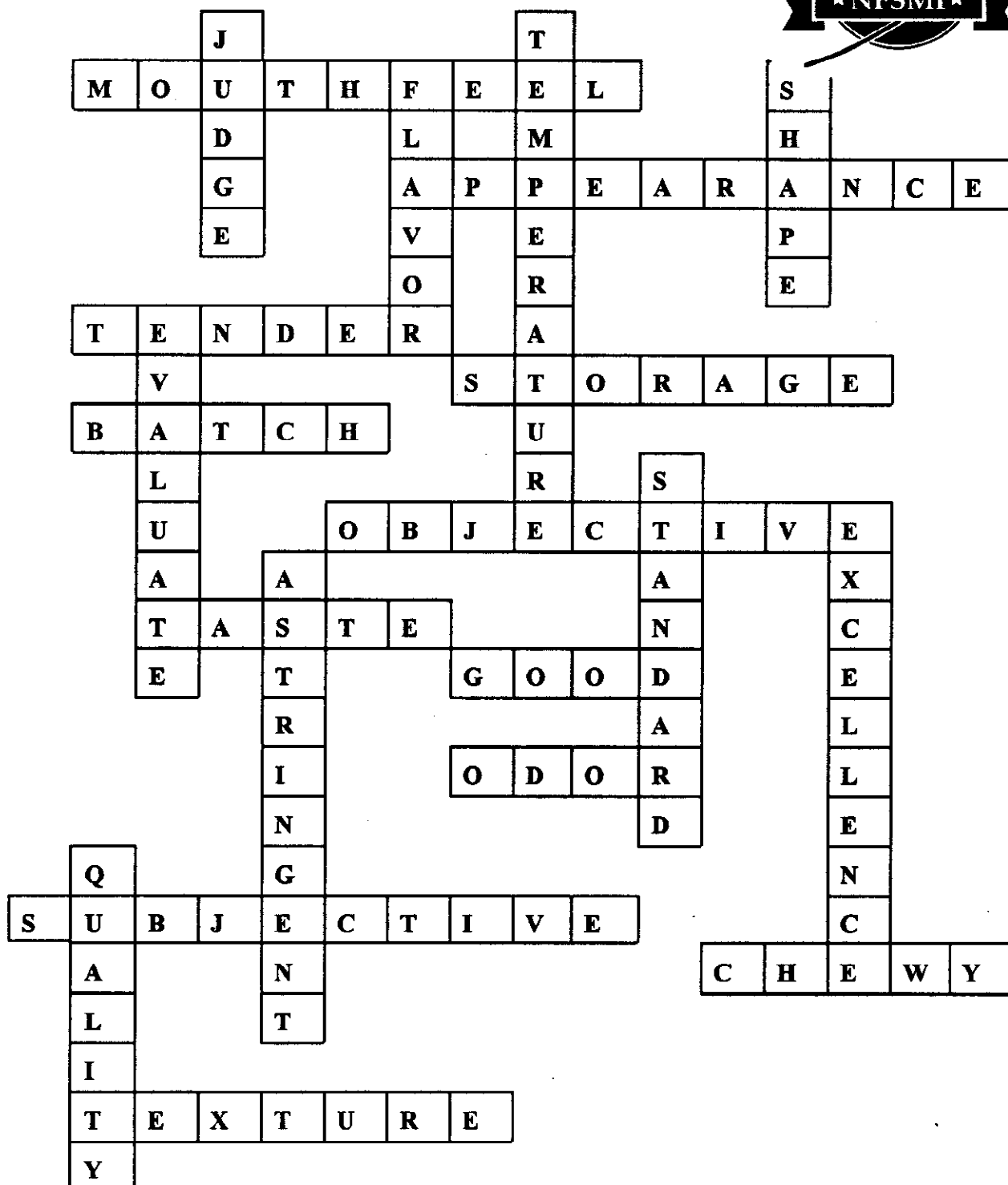
Hint List

Fill in as many words as you can from the definitions. If you get stuck, the key words are all listed below. Find the word that matches the definition that fits in the space.

standard
quality
subjective
objective
taste
good
evaluate

judge
excellence
appearance
flavor
texture
mouthfeel
temperature

storage
batch
shape
color
astringent
tender
chewy





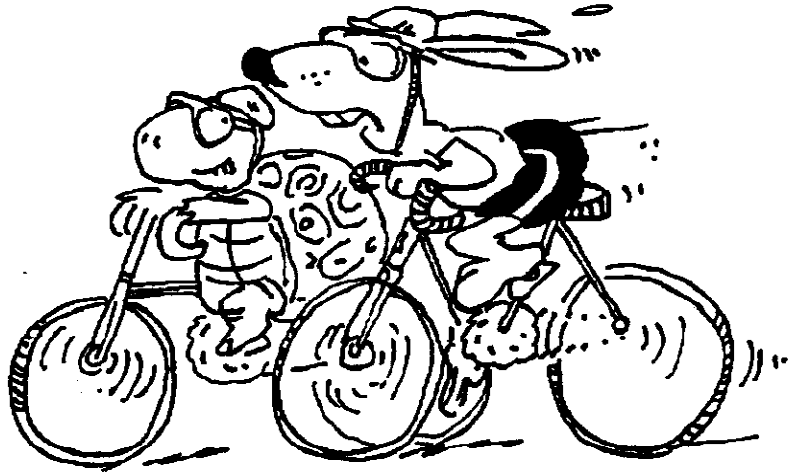
On Your Mark

Lesson 2

Go For The Gold With Customer Service

National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi



Lesson 2

On Your Mark!

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, food service assistants will be able to do the following:

- Summarize marketing in school food service terms.
- Identify three factors related to marketing in the school dining room.
- List appropriate marketing techniques for each factor.
- Develop a marketing plan for the school food service.

Segment 1 - Choices

Each school day, students in our school make two choices about lunch:

1. They decide to go to the school dining room or "Not!"
2. They decide to eat the food served or not.

**To the
instructor**

For this segment, you will need:

Market summary handouts for each class member (page 14)

We have two major goals as school food service professionals.

1. To assure that students go to their classrooms well nourished and ready to learn
2. To boost participation in our school lunch program

Our critics focus on three primary complaints about school food programs:

1. Nutrient content of meals; e.g., too high in fat
2. Not enough students participate
3. Too much plate waste

Do you see the connections? Then what can we do to —

- ◆ Get students to make the right choices?
- ◆ Achieve our participation goals?
- ◆ Silence our critics?

The answer is marketing. We can do that!

Marketing is selling. Every business—and school food service is **big** business—exists to sell its product and service. Everything we do influences the customer one way or the other, and determines whether we get that customer's repeat business.

This lesson will teach techniques we can use, all of them possible and some really quick and easy. Marketing, even the quick and easy kind, makes an enormous difference in our success as food service professionals.

These days children make choices. Times have changed—today's kids don't have to eat what's put on their plates. They make their own decisions—where to eat, what to eat, whether to eat at all.

That's fine if they eat in the school dining room, and if all the choices are good choices. When the experience is good and the food tastes great, then children will make the right choice to eat in the school dining room. Good beginnings lead to good food choices all through life.

Most young children won't choose foods they've never seen before. Ways to get around the new-food phobia:

- ◆ Give a free taste to every customer when the new food is served.
- ◆ Keep serving the food until it isn't new any more—three times before deciding to remove from menus.
- ◆ Get "cool" leaders or student groups to sponsor free samples in the dining room.
- ◆ Use banners or posters to promote the new product at point of sale.
- ◆ Put the new food on a self-serve bar; e.g., a salad bar.

Place foods we want students to choose in choice locations on the serving line or in self-service areas. Who made a rule that meat has to be in the first well on the serving line?



Try this:

- ◆ Put a big, beautiful display of fresh whole fruits first in line.
- ◆ Use several different fruits in an arrangement of grapes, apples, oranges, and bananas, for example, so all children are sure to find one they like.
- ◆ Next, feature salads. Again, a choice is ideal.
- ◆ Then breads, whole-grain first.
- ◆ If we offer a choice of starch, put the low-fat first and make it look more tempting. For example, baked beans with attractive garnishes before unadorned French fries—good strategy.
- ◆ Next, the entrees, low-fat first with the most appealing garnishes.
- ◆ Of course we put low-fat milk in front and whole milk at the back of the display.
- ◆ Desserts should be last on the line, and do feature low-fat options in point-of-sale promotions.

The manual that accompanies these lessons has many promotion ideas that our supervisor may ask us to help implement. This lesson deals only with those marketing measures where the food service assistants make the difference.

Even though we don't plan the menus or write to the parents or put ads on the radio, we have more influence on the customer's choice to participate in school lunch than anyone in the whole school food service structure, from the manager to the secretary of agriculture!

Knowing our markets will help us meet their wants and needs. We tend to think of our customers as students and maybe an occasional teacher. To be fully effective, we must market our product and service not only to all those who eat in school but also to all those who influence them. That means we market to parents, to the school administration, and to the community, as well. We need community support.

(Give handout of market summary and go over the points.) Activity - Discuss ways that the food service staff can market to each segment.



Segment 2 - The eyes have it

The customer eats first with his eyes. The appearance of the food makes all the difference in whether the customer chooses to buy it.

So does the appearance of the staff, both personal and professional. Did you realize that our professional appearance and attitude is a marketing tool? And undoubtedly the single most important thing we wear when we serve our customers is a smile.

The atmosphere in the dining room, how it appeals to the eyes, the nose, the ears—these things influence our customer's decision to come back.

Maybe we figure we've been doing okay, so why bother with marketing. Good marketers know that a product doesn't stay sold. Our competitors are constantly developing new marketing campaigns and strategies to sell their products. They never stop advertising and promoting. Get the message?

Along about spring, when school has been in session for months, when the customers are getting tired of eating in the same place every day, when staff may be getting complacent,

when everybody has the mid-year blahs, we need a new approach.

Stop, Look, and Listen

Stop. Stand back and get a customer's viewpoint.

Look. Come into the cafeteria: What do we see?

- ♦ A drab room or one that is bright and pretty?
- ♦ Appointments clean and sparkling or tired and dusty?
- ♦ A fresh bulletin board or one that the customer has seen a hundred times?

How about the smell—stale cabbage or fresh bread?

The sound: appealing music or pandemonium?

Will the customer feel good in this room and want to come here?

Come out from behind the counter, and take a customer's look at the serving line. Do this every day just before we start service.

- ♦ Is the food fresh or overcooked?
- ♦ Plain pans or pretty garnishes?
- ♦ Stern, silent servers or smiling, helpful people?

Get down on the elementary child's level; see how the line looks. How does it feel to want something that is just out of reach?

To the
instructor

For this segment you will need
Flip chart or chalk board
Garnish handouts (page 15)

Nice to have:

A few garnish examples for demonstration



Listen: What are the customers saying about our product and our service? If you don't know, ask.

Listen to what they say about the taste of the food we serve, about the choices, about the service.

When we hear a complaint, be grateful. What we don't know will hurt us; what we know we can fix. Thank the complaining customer and ask what we can do to fix the problem.

Activity - Ask each staff member to make one suggestion about the cafeteria—such as the serving line, the way the food looks, the way the self-serve items are placed, the bulletin board, the decorations—that will affect the customer's feeling about eating in the school dining room.

The way food looks

Batch cooking assures food that is fresh and appetizing: broccoli that is bright green, not dull olive, shiny rolls and moist cornbread. The coating won't stick to battered fish and chicken if it stays on the steam table for very long.

The quality of our food depends on a fresh batch cooked about every 20 minutes. Also, the fresh food must go to the serving line just as soon as it is ready. Food should never sit on the serving line for more than 20 minutes.

The size of the pan: If we use a full-size steam table pan, the food will look bad at least

half the time. Use half-size pans and we can offer more choices, present a more colorful display, and keep the food fresher and the presentation more attractive.

For example, offer a small pan of bright-green steamed broccoli alongside a half-pan of mixed vegetables. We do want to sell more vegetables, don't we? More choices and more attractive displays are the way to sell more.

Perhaps the most important part of all—the garnishes. Garnishes are the finishing touch, like putting on your lipstick or your earrings after you get dressed. Garnishes make the food look so much better. The garnish can be as simple as a dash of paprika on each serving of cauliflower or as elaborate as a tomato rose on a bed of endive in one corner of the chicken pie.

The garnish need not be something added; it can be the way a food is served. Piping the mashed potatoes around the beef tips will make both meat and mashed potatoes look more delicious.

The choices are limitless, so we choose from whatever is on hand, based on the budget and time we have to invest. Your handout has enough ideas so we can find a garnish to fit every need.

Activity -give garnish handout. Go around the class and ask each employee to suggest ways to use the next garnish on the list.

Ask staff for other ideas for garnishing that aren't on the list. Give a prize to anyone who can come up with an original not on the handout. Post the list in the kitchen for quick reference.

Not only how the food looks on the serving line but how it

looks on the customer's plate or tray makes a difference in whether that customer enjoys the meal. Each food item should be attractive and distinct. Do place the food neatly, without spills or drips, and check the whole effect to make sure it is an appealing display.



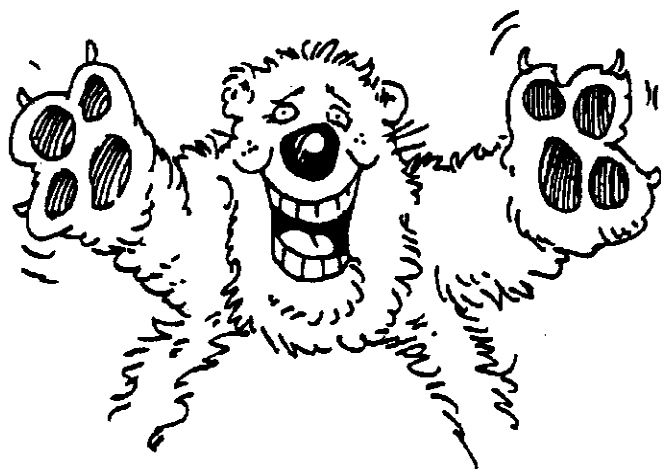
Segment 3 - Staff

What image do we want to project?

When we eat out, what does it do to your appetite if the cook or the wait person is messy or downright dirty? If we want to project a professional appearance, then our uniforms not only should be clean but they should fit properly and our whole appearance should be appropriate to our professional position.

Let's ask ourselves: Do I see myself as someone who has a job or as someone who makes a difference in the lives of children? If we care, let it show. Use customers' names, compliment them, make friends, and we will influence their food choices.

Are we happy, likeable people? Then we need to look like that kind of people! Being interested in the children, liking them and being pleasant to them all come across to our customers as good reasons to come to the school dining room for lunch.



Our attitude toward ourselves, our job, and our co-workers shows on our faces and in our manner. The school food service has a meaningful impact on the mental and physical well being of the students. When we see ourselves fulfilling that role in the lives of children, our customers will know it.

Activity - Say to class:

Our attitude affects the way we feel, and the way we feel affects how we act toward our customers. Try this experiment. Everybody stand up.

(Repeat the following slowly so everybody has time to get into the correct posture.)

Let your shoulders slump. Now let your mouth droop. Let your stomach stick out. Put a frown on your face. Fold your arms across your chest. Double up your fists. Everybody got that? Shoulders slumped, mouth drooped, stomach sticking out, frown, double up your fists.

Now say out loud, "I feel wonderful!"

Now everybody stand up straight as though you were a puppet with a string on each ear lifting you toward the ceiling. Put on a big smile, hold your arms out, palms up. Everybody got it: stand up straight, big smile, arms outstretched.

Now say out loud, "I feel wonderful!"

(Ask the class to react)

Was there any difference in the way you felt the first time compared to the last time? Which time did you really feel wonderful? How do you think you will come across to our customers, the students? We attract more flies with honey than with vinegar. Put on a happy face to have happy customers.

Atmosphere

- ◆ The smell of food cooking. Their first impression probably will be in the hall outside the dining room.
- ◆ The overall look of the school dining room. If it has a drab, institutional look, who'd want to go there? A bright, light, dining room will attract customers.
- ◆ Warm, friendly atmosphere. Children who perceive food service people as stern or grouchy will stay away in droves.
- ◆ Service that is timely and convenient. We're all in a hurry; we all hate to wait in line. Children born into this hurry-up culture adopt the

won't-wait attitude by the time they go the school. If we don't adjust our service to their standards, they won't come. It's that simple. Our customers would rather skip a meal than suffer through long waits and slow service.

- ◆ Immaculate environment. No one wants to eat on dirty tables, look at a dirty floor or walls, or a sloppy serving area. Wipe up spills immediately. Keep service necessities like garbage cans, hotpad holders, and dish towels out of the customer's sight. School food service should be the most immaculate place in town, and usually is.
- ◆ The relationship among school food service employees, and between the staff and the teachers. When these relationships are tense, the atmosphere in the dining room is tense.

Students want food that smells good, looks good, and tastes good.



Activity - Ask each employee to name one improvement staff could make to improve the cafeteria atmosphere. Tell the staff that their suggestions can be small things, as little as a new garnish or greater attention to batch cooking. Or they may have big ideas, which is okay, too. Give them a few minutes to think and discuss, if they wish. Then call on each one by name. Write their suggestions on a flip chart or big piece of wrapping paper and post it for a day or more.



Segment 4 - Market plan

Every good project starts with a good plan. To market school food service successfully, plan carefully. A marketing plan has the following components:

- 1) Customer's identity
- 2) Customer's wants and needs
- 3) Expected outcomes
- 4) Who will be involved
- 5) Objectives and activities
- 6) Time line
- 7) Evaluation

Customers - Obviously the age of the students in our school will affect our marketing strategies. High school students are a greater challenge, but building customer loyalty in elementary students is better assurance of long-term success for our program.

Wants and needs - Look around and see where the customers are eating when they are not in school. Then look at the marketing methods our competition uses. Taste the food and see how it is served. What is there about that place that appeals to our customers?

Remember that our food must taste good by the standards of our customers. Our atmosphere must appeal to the tastes of our customers, so that it is fun

and "in" to eat in the school dining room.

Outcomes - What is it that we want to accomplish with this particular marketing effort? The expected outcome should be specific to the plan.

Who - Good marketing requires partnerships among school food service staff, school administration, parents, and the customers themselves. We have a better chance for success when we form a marketing coalition to develop the marketing strategies.

The coalition will include representatives from each of the partnership groups. The coalition will meet regularly to plan marketing strategies and specific promotions.

Objectives - Objectives are simple statements of what we want to accomplish. Activities are the events and actions to accomplish the objectives.

Time line - Every marketing plan must have carefully conceived deadlines. What is the target date for completion? How long will it take to get all of our activities in place? When will we need to start?

Evaluation - The elements of evaluation will vary according to expected outcomes and objectives. We need an accurate evaluation stated in measurable terms for future reference.

**To the
instructor**

For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart or overhead projector

Market plan handout for each class member (page 16)

Following is a sample marketing plan:

- 1) Identify customers: High school students
- 2) Define needs: Students need to develop healthy food practices for a lifetime of good health.
- 3) Expected outcomes: Customers will choose healthy food most of the time.
- 4) Who will be involved: School food staff, teachers, parents, students.
- 5) Activities: Garnish healthy food choices to make them more inviting

Place healthy food in the best spots on the serving line

Post the calories and fat content so customers can learn.

Inform those who influence customers (parents and teachers).

Add more choices of healthy foods.

- 6) Time line: Carry out activities for one month during October.
- 7) Evaluation: Monitor production records, plate count, and servings to determine if 80 percent of choices were healthy foods.

Activity: Develop a simple marketing plan for your school during class, with participation from all employees. First list needs. Then by vote pick out one priority need that food service assistants can address. Work on the rest of the plan. Decide when to put the plan into effect, and then do it. Give each employee a review puzzle for this lesson. Provide the puzzle key the following day.

Accompanying Materials

The following materials are available from NFSMI to supplement this lesson:

1992 BLT

To Promote Healthy Food

Choices contains materials for a minimum of five hours of instruction, and two videos. ***Marketing Child Nutrition*** and ***Barely Bear and His Friends Learn about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans***. The lessons are designed to be presented in short segments. The Barely Bear lesson provides nutrition education activities for lower elementary grades.

Marketing Child Nutrition and accompanying printed material "Marketing is AIDA" are designed to help directors, managers, and other members of the Child Nutrition team expand their ideas and to visualize new methods of marketing. The marketing video and materials may be used along with the three lessons above or as a separate unit. The

theme for the first three lessons is *Through the Looking Glass*. The lessons will assist staff in understanding the importance of marketing through good food, attractive serving lines, and well-groomed employees.

ET4-92 (all materials) ET4-92(A) Marketing materials

Satellite seminar videotapes are approximately one hour each. Each tape may be purchased alone or with the accompanying handout material that was distributed at satellite teleconference/seminar sites.

Promoting Healthy Food Practices gives practical guidance for marketing and promoting healthy food practices. Features many examples of program promotions from around the country.
NFSMITT 042893

Participation in Child Nutrition programs was the final in the series of teleconferences, shows various ways of increasing participation in Child Nutrition programs.



Lesson 2 - On Your Mark

Handouts

Review Puzzle





Summary of School Food Service Markets

Market	What they want	How to fill wants and needs
Students	Food that tastes good Fun	Serve best possible product in the best possible atmosphere by friendly, helpful staff.
Teachers	Students ready to learn	Convince them to be good role models.
Administrators	Success	Explain how nutrition contributes to academic achievement.
Parents	Convenience Value Quality Family's good health	Suggest eating at school Promise best possible price Publicize menus Publicize nutrition facts
Community	Good schools	Enhance visibility, instruct staff, use mass media to build image



Garnishes

A garnish improves the appearance of food. A garnish should—

- ▶ complement the flavor of the food it decorates
- ▶ be simple and easy to prepare
- ▶ be edible, such as—

Carrot strips, curls, or pennies
Celery curls or tops
Sliced cucumber, peeled or unpeeled and scored with times of a fork
Lemon wedge or slices, fanned or twisted
Orange wedge or slices
Green or red pepper rings, strips, or chopped pieces
Pineapple cubes, slices, or chunks
Red cabbage shreds
Beet slices
Paprika
Cinnamon sprinkles
Parsley sprig or mint or lemon balm or any other herb
Peach slice, chunk, or half
Apple, with or without peel, slice, chunk, or ring
Coconut and nuts, chopped or whole
Bread crumbs, croutons
Raisins, grapes
Pickle strips, cubes, slices
Cherry tomato, tomato wedges or slices
Pimento
Cherries or berries
Whipped topping
Hard-cooked egg, grated, sliced, or wedged

The following garnishes take a little advance preparation but are well worth it:

Frosted grapes - Use a small cluster, three to five grapes. Combine slightly beaten egg white with a little water. Brush over grapes to coat evenly and thoroughly. Sprinkle grapes with granulated sugar; place on rack to dry.

Onion fans - Use long green onion. Cut off root end. Remove most of green top. Make long slashes at both ends for a fringe effect. Put in ice water for about two hours to curl.

Radish accordions - Trim ends of long narrow radishes. Cut 8 or 10 narrow crosswise cuts $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide in each radish, cutting partly through the radish. Put in ice water for at least two hours so slices fan out.

Carrot curls and zigzags - Make thin, lengthwise slices with vegetable peeler. For curls roll up and secure with wooden toothpick. For zigzags, thread on toothpick accordion style. Crisp at least two hours in ice water.

Chocolate curls - Use a bar of sweet chocolate at room temperature. Shave into curls using a vegetable peeler.

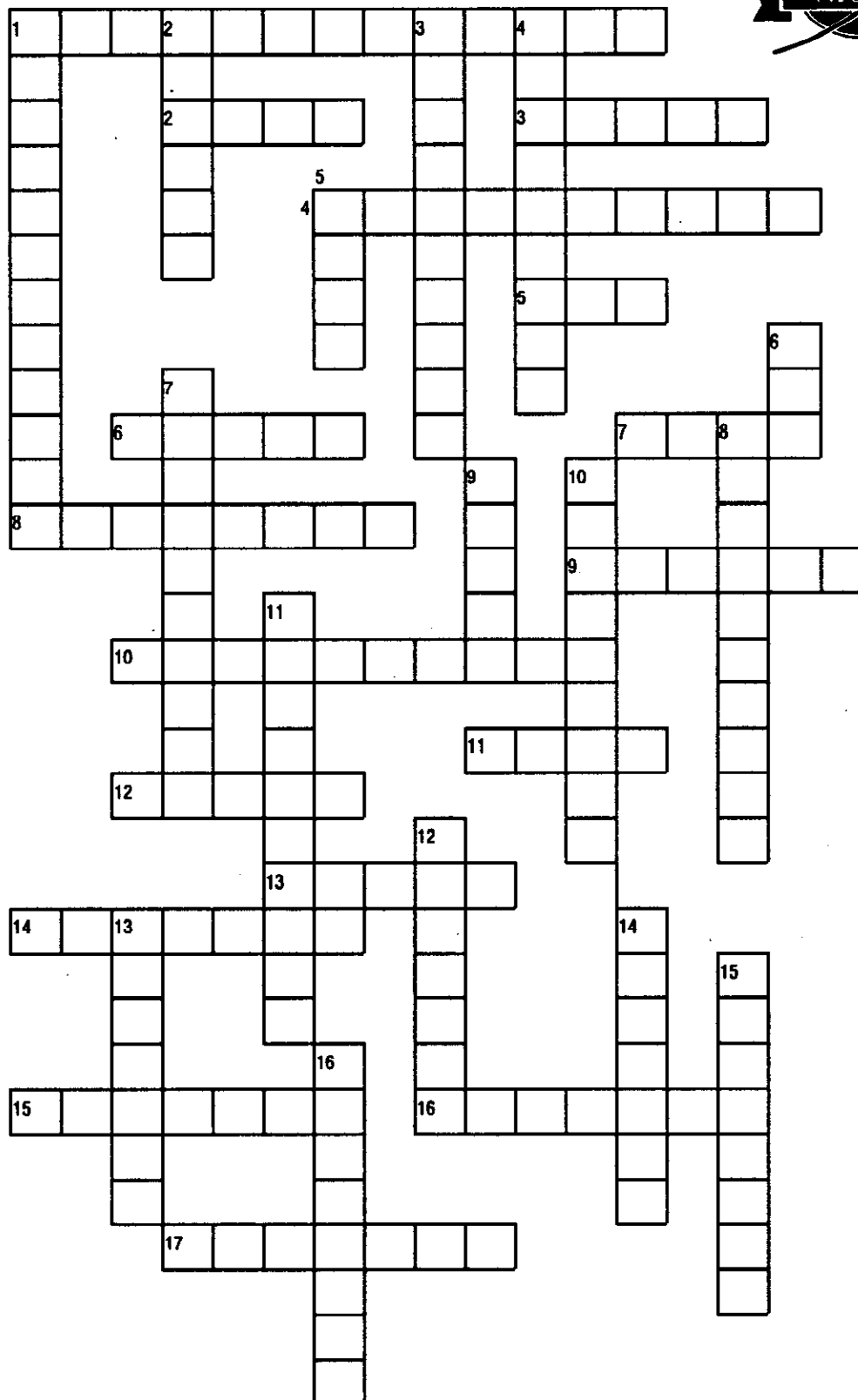
No - Salmonella risk



Marketing plan form

Identify customers	
Define needs	
Expected outcomes	
Who will be involved	
Activities	
Time line	
Evaluation	

Review Puzzle - Lesson 2



Review Puzzle - Lesson 2 Definitions

Fill in as many words as you can from the definitions. If you get stuck, the key words are all listed on the right. Find the word that matches the definition that fits in the space.

Down

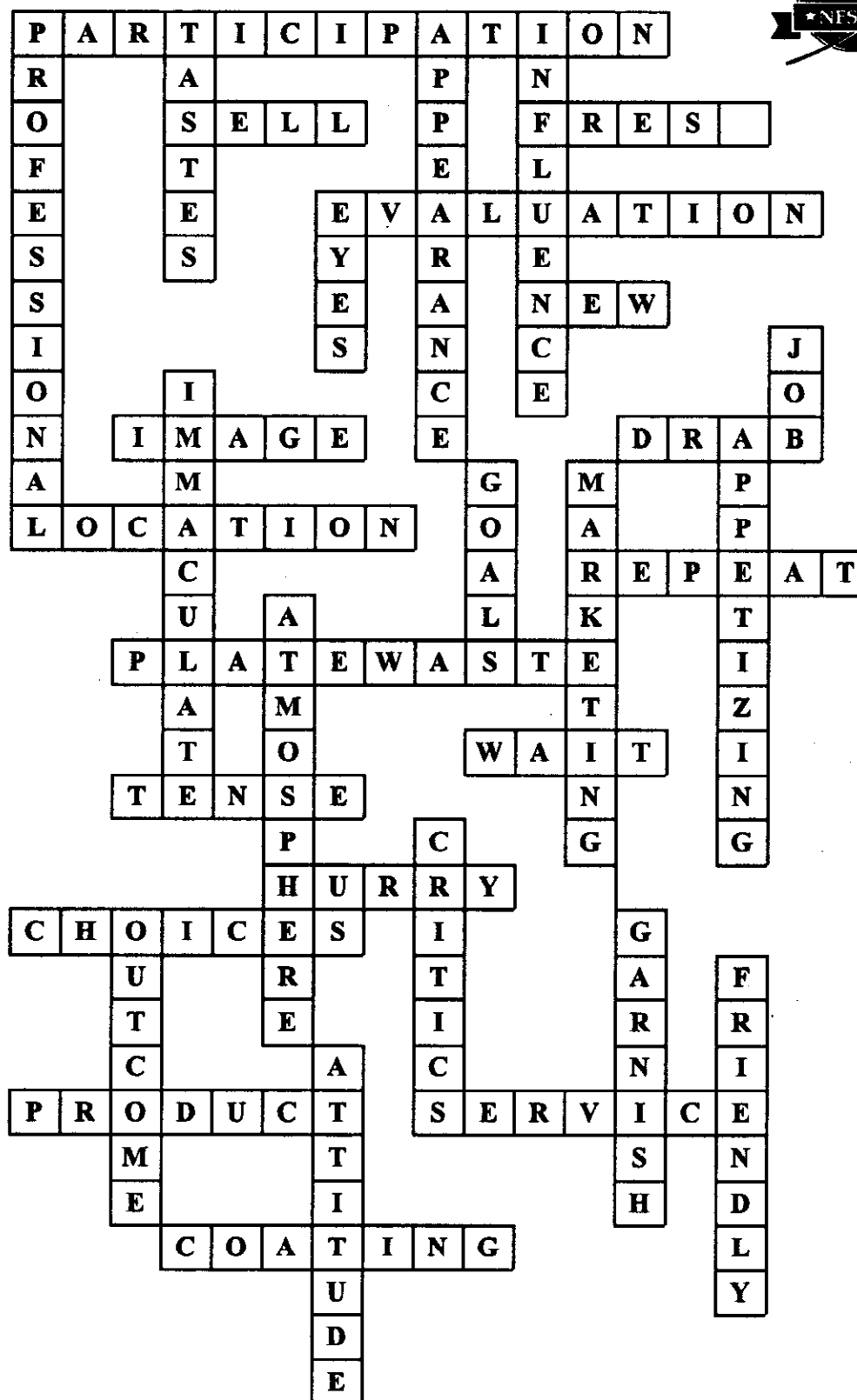
1. How food service staff should see themselves
2. Encourage customers to try new foods
3. Makes the difference in whether customers buy
4. What parents have on their children
5. What customers first eat with
6. It is "on the line."
7. How our serving area should appear
8. How our food should look
9. Ours aim to boost participation
10. Makes a difference in our success
11. Our cafeteria needs a nice one
12. A valuable resource
13. A name for what we want our marketing plan to accomplish
14. How we decorate food
15. How we must appear to customers
16. What shows in nonverbal communication

Across

1. What our marketing aims to increase
2. Another word for market
3. How customers want food to appear
4. Looking at our product and service
5. A food phobia
6. What our public relations improves; general impression of school food service
7. The institutional look
8. Ours is better than our competitor's
9. The kind of customers we seek
10. What we don't want to happen to our food
11. What our customers hate to do
12. If we are, it affects atmosphere in the cafeteria
13. Everybody is in a big one
14. The more we offer, the more business we have
15. The first P of marketing
16. Tied to product, can't market one without the other
17. What comes off breaded meats held too long

Hint List

marketing
eyes
participation
platewaste
goals
critics
sell
product
service
repeat
choices
new
tastes
location
image
garnish
appetizing
coating
fresh
professional
appearance
influence
attitude
job
drab
friendly
wait
hurry
immaculate
outcome
atmosphere
tense
evaluation





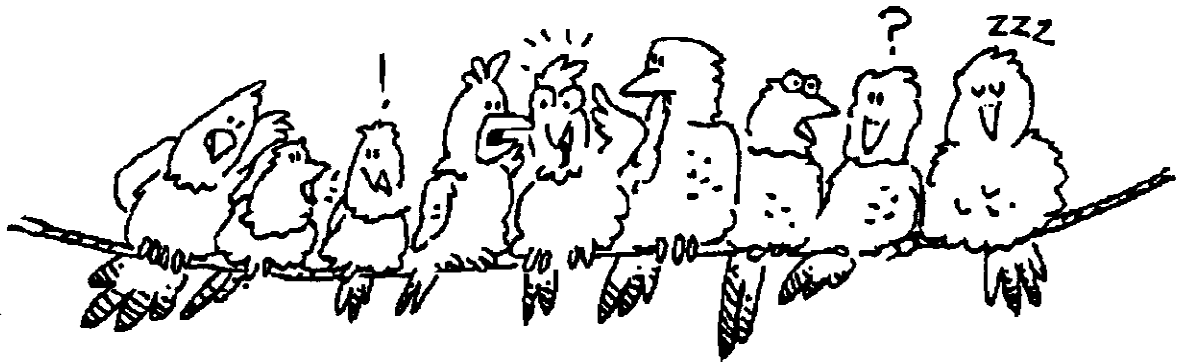
Sending Signals

Lesson 3

Go For The Gold With Customer Service

National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi



Lesson 3

Sending Signals

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, food service assistants will be able to do the following:

- Define communication
- Identify elements in improved listening skills
- List elements in improved verbal skills
- Explain nonverbal communication
- Develop a plan to improve communication skills with co-workers and customers

Communication is a two-way deal between speaker and listener. Effective communication between food service staff and our customers may be the most important element in customer service. To really fulfill the wants and needs of our customers, we must have an open and effective channel of communication with those customers.

Start by asking staff what communication is, what the word means to them. Write answers on board, flip chart, or transparency. Continue until no one has another meaning to add. Make sure "listening" is on the list. Post list and use it all during the lesson.

To the
instructor



For this segment, you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

2 copies of Patterns (page 13)

Paper and pencil for each class member

Communication is getting a thought, an idea, from one mind into another. We communicate to inform, to entertain, to express emotion, but more often the real purpose of communication is to persuade, to influence. Can you see the relationship between effective communication and our customer's healthy food choices?

Segment 1 - Receiving signals

According to a study by the American Management Association, the average executive spends at least 20 percent of his time (that's one full day in every work week) coping with misunderstandings.

Misunderstanding means that lines of communication were blocked. The message didn't get through. Why might that happen? What are some things that can block communication?

What if a manager gives directions hurriedly and doesn't bother to show the employee who doesn't know how to do what is asked? Any time we give directions, **it is our responsibility to check for understanding.** We need to ask the listener to repeat the instructions to make sure the message was received. We must make sure our co-workers feel comfortable about asking us to repeat or telling us that we didn't make the message clear. When we can speak frankly to each other without stress and strain,

we keep the communication channels open.

Communication is a two-way responsibility. There is a sender, and there is a receiver. The sender must send a clear message—most of this lesson will be about sending clear messages. The other side of the story is listening. No matter how clear the message, the receiver has to be listening.

Listening probably is the most neglected of the communication skills. Most of us are not very good listeners because we think faster than we speak. Our thoughts race ahead of the speaker. We're thinking instead of listening, thinking about what the speaker is going to say or what we're going to respond. We half listen, if we listen at all. Granted, most sending is less than perfect, but combine imperfect sending with poor listening, and it is small wonder that there is so much misunderstanding.

In this segment, we will talk about active listening skills. The next segments are about our sending skills, both verbal and nonverbal.

*Ask if communication is important.
Ask with whom communication is important.*

In the last segment we will find out how to improve our communication skills, with each other and with our customers.



And of course, when we become good communicators, our relationships with our family and friends will be on firmer footing, too, a spin-off benefit from this lesson.

Listeners rarely give the speaker their full and undivided attention. Some of the reasons:

- Speaker is not a good communicator—boring, poor delivery, poor vocabulary, distracting mannerisms

(Stop and ask class to think of some annoying habits in people they know, such as "you know," every other word, or "uh", nervous tics, no eye contact)

- Listener doesn't agree with speaker; mentally arguing instead of listening
- Listener doesn't want to hear it; unwelcome message
- Listener is busy doing other things.

Most of us can concentrate on only one thing at a time. Talk to a co-worker who is concentrating on measuring ingredients and she probably will either miss the message or make mistakes in measuring.

Granted that most people are less than good communicators; therefore, we miss good



messages that are wrapped in a less-than-perfect package.

However, we can train ourselves to listen. Let's start by looking at some of the distractions that keep us from getting the message:

- Not concentrating; hearing but doing something else or thinking about something else at the same time
- Interrupting speaker often; disconnected thoughts
- Allowing speaker to finish but formulating response at the same time
- Replying too soon, without thinking

Ways we can overcome these natural tendencies to half listen:

- Focusing on speaker's central idea will help concentration.
- Concentrating on content will diminish delivery distractions.
- Withholding judgment; waiting for the speaker to finish.
- Pausing to summarize the message, to check for accuracy, then thinking through our response.

Activity - Let's see how accurately we can tell and hear a rather simple message. Ask for two volunteers to describe a simple design. (Pass out sheet of paper to each person.)

First pattern - Ask first volunteer to describe the design, and each class member is to draw what speaker describes. Only volunteer may talk. Class may not ask any questions, although they can ask the speaker to repeat. Each employee draw the pattern volunteer describes. Class members must not talk to each other nor look at each other's drawing.

Second pattern - Second volunteer describes the design. This time the class may ask questions. The volunteer may respond to any question but may not show the design.

When everyone has completed second drawing, show the first design and

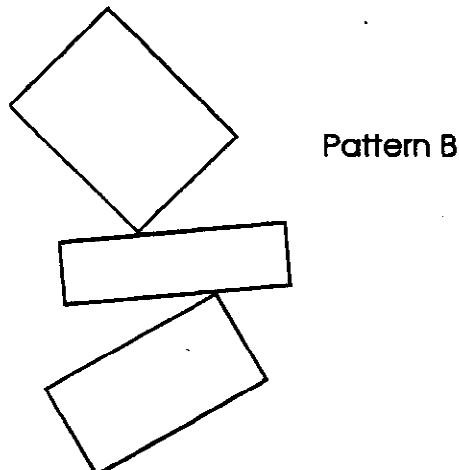
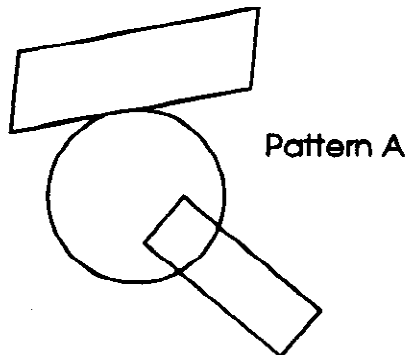
have everyone in the class show their own drawings. Do the same with the second design. Ask class these questions:

Which design were you able to draw more accurately?

Was there any difference between (first volunteer) and (second volunteer)? Why was one more effective than the other?

How does interaction between speaker and listener change the way the message goes through?

What does that tell us about communicating on the job? With our customers?



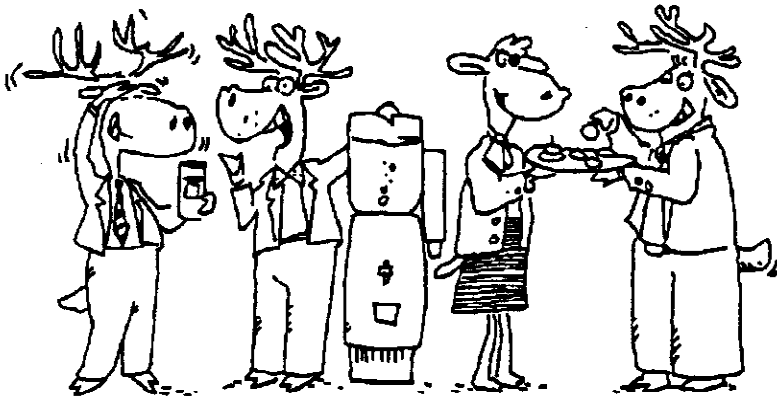
Instructor: This is for your reference only. The full-size version for the two volunteers is at the back of this lesson.

Segment 2 - Sending Signals

Refer to the list made in Segment 1. Ask class to identify those elements on the list that are involved in sending the message through verbal communication.

Usually we communicate by talking to each other. On a daily basis, in our jobs and with our families, we communicate verbally.

Research indicates that we spend 70 percent of our day in verbal communication. That's 10 to 11 hours a day talking and listening. According to the research, the average person spends more time listening than



speaking. Think about it. That means some people must do most of the talking, doesn't it?

We use words when we talk; we express our thoughts, our

ideas, in words to get those thoughts from our minds into other peoples' heads. Is communicating with words difficult, class?

(Wait for class response.)

Sometimes. Why?

(Wait for volunteer response. Record responses on board, flip chart, or transparency.)

Communicating with co-workers is our first priority. If we don't communicate with each other, we probably will fail to communicate with customers.

What are some of the reasons we need good communication with customers?

- We want to make them feel welcome and satisfied with our product and service.
- We want to influence their food choices.
- We have limited time with customers, so communication must be effective.

Words mean different things to different people. People give meaning to words by their previous experience, their expression, by tone of voice. The impact of the various elements involved in communication has been carefully measured.

To the
instructor



For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

List of communication meanings from last segment.

"Meaning of Words" handout for each class member (page 14)



Here is how it came out:

- Impact of words - 7%
- Impact of tone of voice - 38%
- Body language - 55% (non-verbal communication)

Two elements in verbal communication are the words we use and the tone of voice. But we start with words. We have to use words to express ideas verbally; words are all we have. Therefore we must choose them carefully to express our ideas correctly.

If you listen to the news or read the paper, you know how a reporter can color a story, change its meaning with the words he selects. One army commits an "atrocious," but when our soldiers do the same thing it is a "regrettable error" or a "miscalculation."

Activity - Tone of voice. Let's try an experiment with a little word to see how we can change the meaning. The word is "Oh." Instructor read each statement twice. Go around the class and have each person respond to the statement by saying "Oh." The first time the employee will express a positive emotion—approval, excitement, delight. The next employee is asked to say "Oh" with a tone of voice that expresses a negative emotion, such as anger, disgust or sadness. Continue around the class reading each statement twice.

"Your mother wants you to call right away."

"Look in the oven and see how your cake is doing."

"She is going to marry your ex-husband."

"You're making the salad."

"Here is your check."

"This is what we're having for lunch."

Please notice that none of these statements expressed anything, one way or the other. You have no idea whether the cake looks good until you hear the tone of voice of that "Oh." It's not what we say, it's the way that we say it.

Actually, communication is both words and tone, agreed? We must choose our words carefully. Some words, like "Oh," are fairly neutral in meaning, while some words are "color" words; that is, they immediately inspire an emotion.

For example, "accident" is neutral, "disaster" is a color word. "Leader" is relatively positive, but "boss" has a bit of negative connotation. What are some other examples?

Write responses on a board, flip chart or transparency.

Another thing about words is that they mean different things to different people. What do you think of when I say "bonnet" and "boot?" To the English a bonnet is the hood of the car and boot is the trunk. What does "fast" mean to you?

(Wait for class to come up with several answers. Then pass out handout.)

We can summarize this section on verbal communication with several points to keep in mind when we choose words for communication:

- Try to use words that mean the same thing to most people.
- Understand that color words arouse emotions.
- Combine choice of words with tone of voice to com-

municate intended meaning.

- Think before you speak. Set goals—what you want the receiver to know, do, or understand.
- Check back with listener to make sure what listener heard was what you meant.

Segment 3 - Nonverbal communication



Refer back to list from Segment 1. Identify any on the list that are nonverbal. Remind class how important nonverbal communication is and ask them to add to the list. Ask "what about . . . ?" for any of the following that are not yet on the list: the way we dress, our grooming, facial expression, nervous habits, posture, gestures.

Here are some examples. What do these gestures say to your customers about how you feel?

Arms folded across chest

Hands on hips

Frown

Looking down, looking off, not looking at customer

Yawning

Tapping foot, tapping serving spoon

Sighing

Slouching

How about these?

Smile

Leaning slightly forward

Direct eye contact

Head tilted to one side

Buoyant posture

Arms relaxed or out-stretched

Activity: Charades. Divide class into two teams. Give one person on each team one of the expressions to act out. Only facial expressions, hand and body movements allowed; no talking or lip sync. Other team members guess. First team to get all the expressions correct wins.

Go away!

Stay calm.

No more for me.

Be quiet.

I am hot.

I promise.

I am cold.

Follow me.

I want a ride.

That person is crazy

Come here.

Speed it up!

**To the
instructor**



For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

Communications meanings from Segment 1

2 copies of charades words, cut apart

1 copy of scenarios, cut apart

Put yourself in the customer's place. What is the effect of the following?

Sloppy, ill-fitting, or less-than-clean uniforms?

Hair hanging down over the face?

Bright nail polish or chipped polish?

Lots of jewelry?

Run down or scuffed shoes?

When you are a customer, which of the following do you want to wait on you?

(Read slowly.)

Someone who is warm, patient, self-confident, interested, and helpful?

Someone who is bored, sullen, distracted, hurried, or disinterested?

Role-play activity - Divide the class in pairs and give each pair a scenario to act out. One plays the good example, the other the bad example. Allow two minutes preparation. They may call up another class member to play the customer. Ask class to critique customer communication in each case.

1. Server is relaxed, smiling, erect posture, making eye contact, "How about some barbecued chicken with a baked potato?"

2. Server is leaning on the counter, frown, tapping foot, looking down, sighs and says, "What do you want? Hurry, there's a long line."

1. Smiling server leans slightly forward. "Hi Bobby, your new shirt is a great color. I bet you want spaghetti, and how about a salad with it?"

2. Server, hands on hips, yawning, "Hey you, are you a student here? This is just for students."

1. Server rushes to line, hunting for serving spoon, can't find gloves, shoving hair out of face, says, "Wait a minute, can't you. Your class is early. We're not ready yet."

2. Server hurries to line, where all equipment is in place. "Oh, you're early today Ann. I'm glad to see you, and we'll be ready any second now."

1. Server yells to co-worker, "Hey, get another pan of that broccoli out here. These kids are waiting! The line is backing up. What's wrong with you?"

2. Server to customer, "I'm really glad that you like broccoli, David, and I'll cook some just for you tomorrow, so you have a salad today and broccoli tomorrow, okay?"

In these scenarios we see that words, tone, and body language all play a part in the message we receive. Remember, though, that nonverbal communication has more impact than anything we say. We can make sure our body language gives our customers a positive impression—consciously put on a happy face. Wear a smile. Feel good about ourselves and our jobs, and it will show!

Segment 4 - Review and develop a plan

How do our customers communicate with us? What skills do we need, how can we improve customer's communication with us?

(Review characteristics of good listeners, page 3-3.)

And how do we communicate with our customers?

(Review words, tone of voice, non-verbal communication.) Activity - Have class fill out communication profile. Assure them it is for their own use, won't be taken up or graded. Then brainstorm some of the following questions with the class. Some answers are given, but there are other answers to meet communication needs of individuals.

Q: What's the first step to improve our communication skills?

A: Understand the importance of communication to customer service.

Accept that most of us could stand



to improve our skills.

Decide to do it. (It will take some determination!)

Learn to listen to good communicators and adopt their best methods.

Q: How shall we proceed?

A: Develop three parts to a plan for improvement, based on the profile—one plan to listen better, one plan to make sure we communicate what we really mean, a third for nonverbal communication.

Set our goals in concrete terms.

Regularly check changes in our profile.

Change and adapt the plan as we continue to evaluate and see our needs for improvement.

Evaluate results.

(Hand out communication diary.)

Practice a lot.

Post "Positive Recipe." Optional - Provide copies to class members who want a copy to keep.

To the instructor



For this segment you will need:

Copy of handouts for each class member

- Communication profile (page 15) and Communication diary (page 16)
- Toward improving verbal communication (page 17)
- Positive Recipe (optional, page 18))

Accompanying materials

The following materials are available from NFSMI to supplement this lesson.

1991 BLT. Lessons cover traditional meal pattern requirements for lunch and breakfast, requirements of offer vs. serve for lunch and breakfast, and teaching young children to like new foods. The package includes two videos, *Recognizing Reimbursable School Lunches* and *Barely Bear and His Friends Learn to like New Foods*.

NFSMI ET 1-91 (entire package)

NFSMI ET 1-91 (A) (Excludes Barely Bear)

Satellite teleconference/seminar videotapes are approximately one hour each. Each tape

may be purchased alone or with the accompanying handout material that was distributed at satellite teleconference/seminar sites.

Personnel That Make a Difference is designed for those who are responsible for hiring and training new employees to work in Child Nutrition Programs.

NFSMITT 100793

Participation is the final in the series of teleconferences. Uses examples of participation from all over the country to show how to actually increase participation in Child Nutrition Programs.



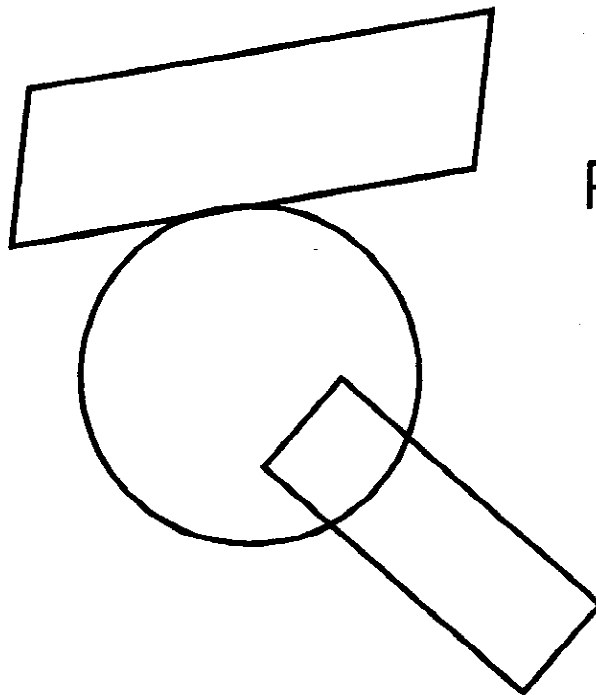
Lesson 3 - Sending Signals

Handouts

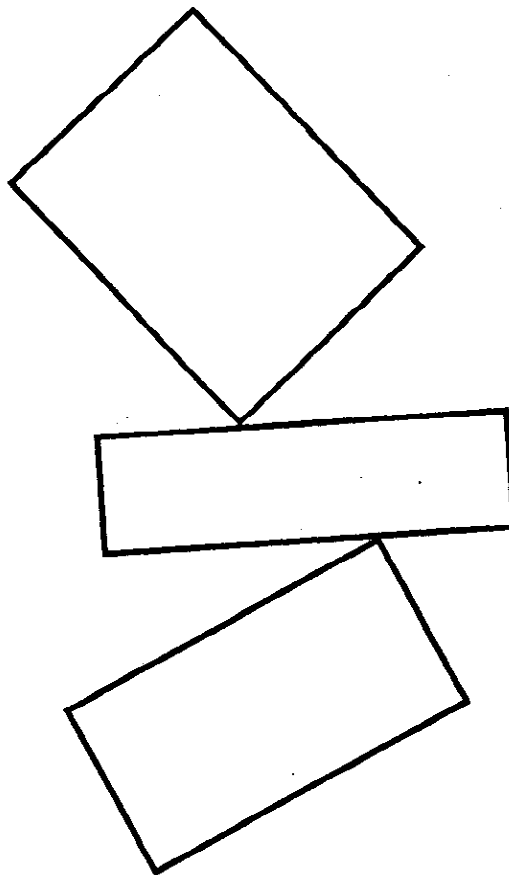
Review puzzle



Lesson 3, Segment 1



Pattern A



Pattern B



The Meaning of Words

Not all words mean the same thing to all people. For example, what do we mean by “fast?” A fast horse is one that runs rapidly—unless he is tied fast. However, a color is fast if it doesn’t run at all.

When we observe a religious fast, we abstain. Yet in a generation past young women who abstained from practically nothing were considered fast.

“Up” has many meanings. Most people understand when we use the word “up” meaning toward the sky, the top of the list, the top of the page. But why do we wake up or bring up a topic at a meeting? Why do workers speak up and why is it up to the manager to write her report?

We brighten up a room, light up a cigar, polish up the silver, lock up the house, and fix up an old car. On the other hand, people stir up trouble, line up for tickets, work up an appetite, and sometimes get tied up in traffic. They show up late for an appointment; then they have to make up excuses and end up in trouble.

To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed up is quite another. As confusing as it may seem, a drain has to be opened up because it is plugged up.

To be up on the proper use of up, you should look up the word in your dictionary. If you are up to it, you might make a list of the ways up is used. It will take up a lot of your time, but if you don’t give up, you may end up with about a thousand uses of “up.”



My communication profile

	Yes	Not sure	No
As a listener do you concentrate on what's being said and not let your mind wander?			
Do you listen objectively until the customer is finished speaking?			
Do you summarize what the customer said to make sure you understood?			
Do you plan your answer after the customer is finished speaking?			
Do you plan what you are going to say before you answer?			
When you talk, do you plan what you want the customer to know, understand, or feel before you speak?			
Do you state your thoughts clearly, concisely, and completely?			
Do you talk in terms your customer can understand?			
Do you choose your words carefully to make your meaning clear?			
Do you check to see if what the customer heard is what you meant?			
Do you listen to your tone of voice and does it mean what you want to communicate?			
Does your body language give the customer the right impression?			

Any "no" answer needs improvement. A "not sure" answer may be an area to watch carefully.

(You can use the above profile for checking communication with any persons with whom you communicate. Where it says "customer" substitute the appropriate word, such as supervisor, manager, co-worker, spouse, friend, or family member.)

Keep a communication diary for a typical day. To evaluate your communication with co-workers, start when you get to work and record every contact during the working day. Evaluate your communication with other groups during the time you have contact with them.

[illegible]



Toward improving verbal communication

- ▶ **Try to use words that mean the same thing to most people.**
- ▶ **Understand that color words arouse strong emotions.**
- ▶ **Combine choice of words with tone of voice to communicate intended meaning.**
- ▶ **Think before you speak. Set goals—what you want the receiver to know, do, or understand.**
- ▶ **Check back with listener to make sure what listener heard was what you meant.**

The Positive Recipe

Weights/Measures

3 cups
1 lb.
1 lb.
5 tbsp.
9 tsp.
2 oz.
½ tsp.
½ cup

Ingredients

Clear goals, workable
Communication, open
Trust and understanding
Appreciation (or praise)
Kindness
Adaptability
Humor
Commitment

Additional topping

⅓ cup
⅛ tsp.

Encouragement
Challenges

Directions:

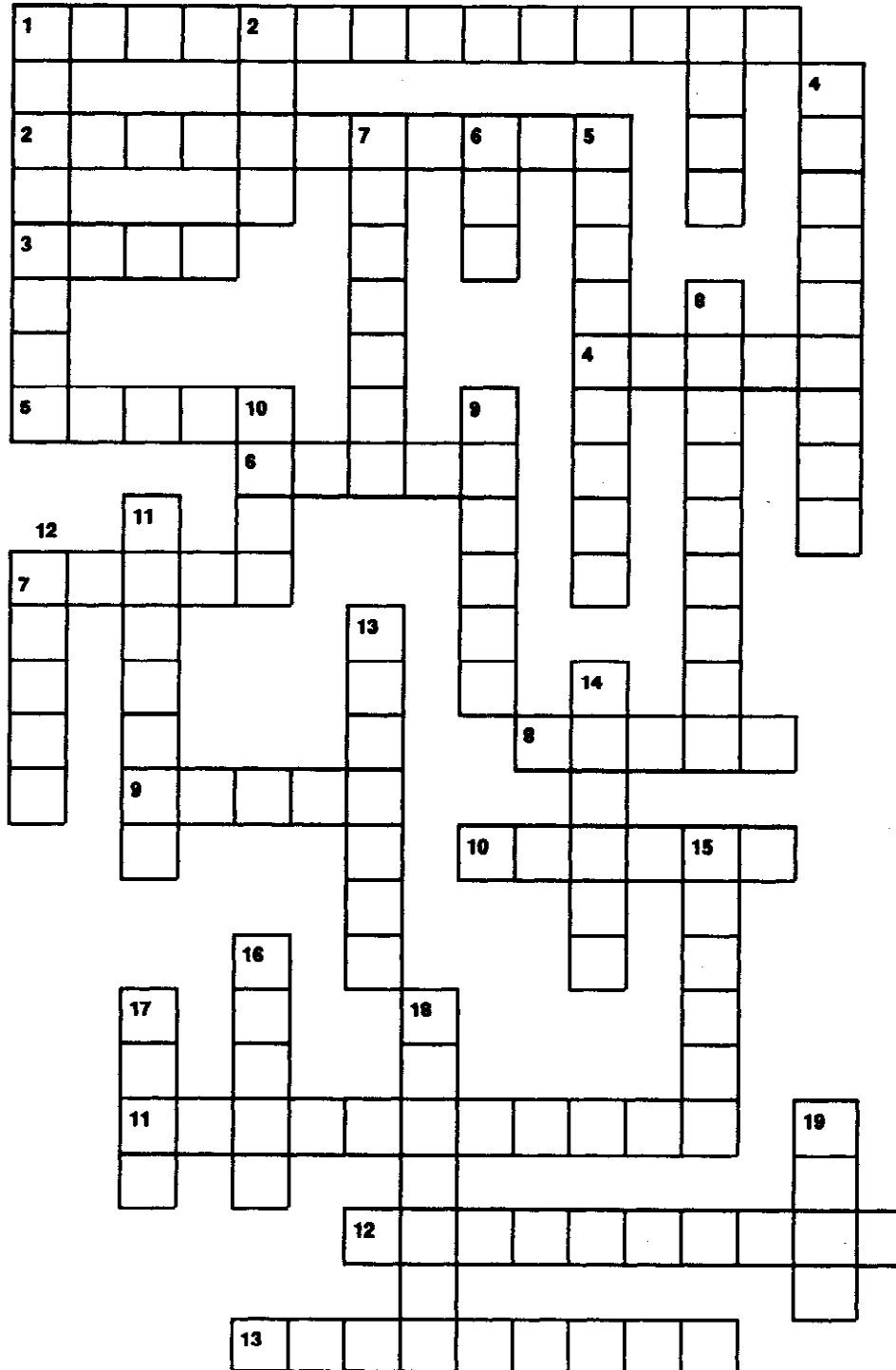
1. Combine workable, clear goals with open communication. Mix well. Gradually add trust and appreciation until fully mixed.
2. Add kindness to mix. Blend thoroughly. Cook and stir until thickened.
3. Add adaptability and humor until heated.
4. Pour heated mixture into pan. Stir in commitment.
5. Finish as desired. The finished product should be **positive**! If signs of ill will or confusion develop, check ingredients for accuracy.
6. Optional: The finished product can be sprinkled with encouragement and challenges.

Make your kitchen come alive with this new, exciting principle, "The Positive Recipe." Clear, concise instructions or expectations for tasks enable us to accomplish work with little or no help. Open communication enables us to make suggestions or comments freely or to ask any necessary questions. A working environment filled with trust and praise for each other motivates each person to do the best job possible. Each one of us responds confidently to kindness! Being courteous and helping others is a sure way to influence people, as well as enriching our own lives.

The ability to face challenges or problems with enthusiasm and flexibility wins respect and admiration. The right attitude can solve problems fast and effectively. Taking the opportunity to laugh and enjoy each other can build strong bonds. A person who feels needed will be more committed to the "team" and its efforts. We all crave approval and recognition as individuals. Daily or regular encouragement and challenges keep us going.

Source: Terry Keisler, Program Specialist, South Carolina Department of Education

Review Puzzle - Lesson 3



Review Puzzle - Lesson 3 Definitions

Fill in as many words as you can from the definitions. If you get stuck, the key words are all listed on the right. Find the word that matches the definition that fits in the space.

Down

1. The listener half of communication two-way responsibility
2. What communication channels must be for the message to get through
3. What has more impact than words but less than body language
4. Another name for body language
5. What we want communication to be
6. Our co-workers should feel comfortable doing this
7. How we usually communicate
8. Listening is the most
9. A way to check for understanding of communicated message
10. A nonverbal message indicating boredom
11. What we should do with our eyes
12. A way to improve listening skills
13. What we can all do to our communication skills
14. Yes, a lot of speakers are
15. What the receiver of communication must do well
16. Another word for brief wait to organize response
17. Another kind of language
18. What must be open for communication to work
19. What the speaker does with the message

Across

1. Communication is a two-way
2. A way to improve listening skills
3. What communication gets from one mind to another
4. What we strive to make our communicated message
5. We form before speaker is finished
6. One of the mental distractions to listening
7. Body language that expresses disapproval
8. What we use to express ideas
9. The kind of words that stir emotions
10. Both listeners and speakers must have
11. Why we don't listen well
12. Sender's responsibility to check
13. The real purpose of most communication

Hint List

listen
nonverbal
speaker
open
effective
channel
idea
influence
understand
repeat
ask
responsibility
send
receiver
clear
neglected
improve
skills
argue
distraction
reply
boring or bore
focus
concentrate
yawn
contact
pause
talking
words
tone
body
color
frown





On The Line

Lesson 4

Go For The Gold With Customer Service

National Food Service Management Institute

The University of Mississippi



Lesson 4

On the Line

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, food service assistants will be able to do the following:

- Associate staff action with customer decisions at point of sale.
- Define "personal selling."
- List three serving strategies that increase sales.
- Identify competitors for the customers served by Child Nutrition programs.

Segment 1 - Our business

School food service is a business, with customers and competitors, like any other business. How long we stay in business will depend on how well we market our product and service.

Our jobs and our future are, literally and figuratively, "on the line." This lesson is about the line.

When eating at school is fun and the food tastes good, we have satisfied customers. The satisfied customer comes back.

**To the
instructor**

For this segment, you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

School menus, a set for each group of three or four class members

Everything we do in our jobs is preparation for the moment when the customer comes into the school dining room. That's when it is all "on the line." (Pun intended.)

We all know that how the food tastes is really important to customer satisfaction. How the food looks and smells is the beginning of how it tastes. Aroma and appearance can't be separated from the flavor. How the dining room looks is part of how the food tastes—as you know if you have ever tried to eat a meal in a dirty restaurant.

We've talked about those things; and we've got them all in place. Now let's consider the line, the line our jobs are on.

Why do we even have school food service?

(Pause, restate the question. Look around the class for a few seconds, then call on someone by name.)

Yes, we are part of the educational system, a vital part. We do three things:

- ◆ We send students to the classroom well nourished and ready to learn.
- ◆ We help children learn lifelong good eating habits.
- ◆ We can help prevent the early beginnings of chronic diseases.

Is our job important?



(Wait for class to answer.)

But we're not the only ones influencing our students' eating habits. Television, is that a factor? Many of our students' mothers work, so they use more convenience foods than our mothers did, and they eat out more.

Our job is to serve children good, healthful, nutritious food. Our competitors aren't so particular. They just want the business.

You know why fast food franchises are beginning to offer a few low-fat items? They're smart; there is a small but growing demand for more nutritious food. If we are going to get and keep the business, we must beat them at their own game, marketing good food.

On the line, that's where we are. Think about some ways our competitors get business and how we could use their methods.

- ◆ We could post menus so students can read the choices while they wait.
- ◆ Let's advertise our product, using appealing adjectives.
- ◆ We can offer meal deals, combining choices so customers can order quickly by the number, just like the restaurants do.



Combos will save staff time and make the line move faster. Combos are also a way to make sure all meals contain the components that make them reimbursable.

Activity - Divide class into groups of three or four. Pass out copies of your school's menus and ask them to develop at least three numbered meal-deal specials for each day. Suggest one cold, pre-plated meal, two meals using the entrees for that day (if you offer a choice) or a soup and sandwich or soup and salad meal, or a trip to a self-serve bar, depending on the services you have available. A low-calorie or "lite" choice is popular with teenage girls, if you serve that age group. Give groups 5 minutes and have a leader in each group write the menu on transparency or flip chart to show to the group. Make sure every numbered meal meets the meal requirements for reimbursement.

We could make an attractive display, a plated sample of each featured meal and put those plates where the students can see them, to tempt their appetites.

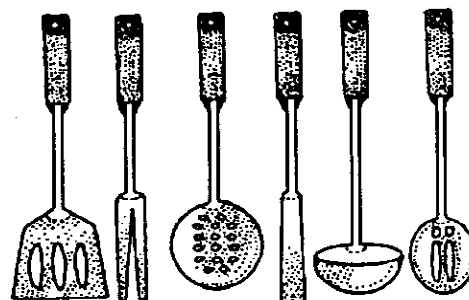
(Discuss where the displays can go, how to make them especially tempting and attractive. Assign staff on a rotating basis to prepare the displays.)

We can group choices so students can make their selections quickly, even if they don't order by number. If we use half-size pans, we can put choices together on the line. That will speed up service, which is another selling tool—no waiting, instant service.

The line display: we need proper size pans, everything neat and clean. Signs along the serving line are good marketing tools, if they are neatly lettered and worded so students understand and don't have to ask questions.

We have some items that students pick up themselves. Let's observe for any bottlenecks we can see in the line, where students may have to wait to get items. When we spot a bottleneck, let's talk about them at our regular meetings and see what we can do to eliminate those problems.

One way to speed up service is to make sure everything is ready and right before we serve the first student. Every person on the line should see to it that they have the right serving equipment for the age children we serve.



Some other ideas:

- ◆ Be informed about our food and nutrition so we can answer questions
- ◆ Remember as many customer names as we can.
- ◆ Sell the service with a smile and a helpful attitude.

Segment 2 - Personal Selling

The serving line is where the crucial marketing happens. Have any of us ever thought of ourselves as sales people? We are. We are more important to the marketing of our product than any amount of advertising, education, promotion, or public relations. Those things matter. They bring our customers into our dining room. But we are the ones who make the sale, those of us who serve on the front line.

It's called personal selling. Personal selling involves both verbal and nonverbal communication, starting with friendly, courteous contact with the customer. Personal selling is how we look and act. Personal selling is what we say and how we ask for the customer's business.

Personal selling has two components:

- Suggestive selling
- Staff attitude.

Suggestive selling is what we say that motivates our customers to make good choices. You hear it in all the fast-food franchises. Here are some examples:

"Would you like a salad with your spaghetti?"

"We're offering a two-for-one special on hot rolls today."

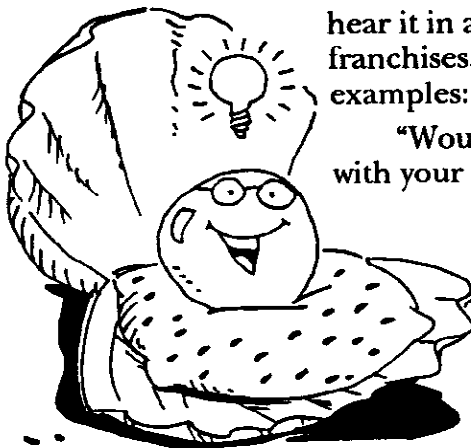
"Lettuce and tomato on your

hamburger?"

"How about a broccoli-cheese topping for your baked potato?"

Staff attitude means that we get back the same signals we send out.

- Well groomed staff inspires confidence in food quality.
- Moderate tones sound friendly. Loud or abrupt voices are threatening.
- Short answers imply, "Don't bother me."
- Smiling staff makes students feel welcome.
- Helpful staff gets more business.
- Remembering names makes customer feel important.
- Caring staff influences customer to make good food choices.
- Courtesy always pays off in customer satisfaction.



Activity - role play. Divide the class into pairs. Give them role play situations and five minutes to prepare. Have each pair act out their scenario for the class, first the way it is written. Then have them reverse roles and the other partner ad lib a better way to serve the customer.

1. Employee deep in conversation with another employee while placing meal items on plate without looking at customer or asking for customer's order or making suggestions.

To the
instructor

For this segment you will need
A copy of roleplay scenarios, cut apart

2. Employee: "Whaddya want? Hurry up, there's a long line."

3. Employee: "No we don't have any fried chicken left, only baked. You want it or not?"

4. Employee leans heavily on counter, frowning, sighs deeply, serves silently.

5. Employee picks all through pan looking for a choice piece for customer being served, smiles and says, "I picked that especially for you." Then hurries to next customer and says, "Here."

6. Employee: "If you don't want it, don't eat it, but I have to serve it so go on and take it."

7. Employee: "Don't blame me. I don't make the menus."

8. Employee: "No, you can't have any more. That's the rule. Don't you know the rules?"

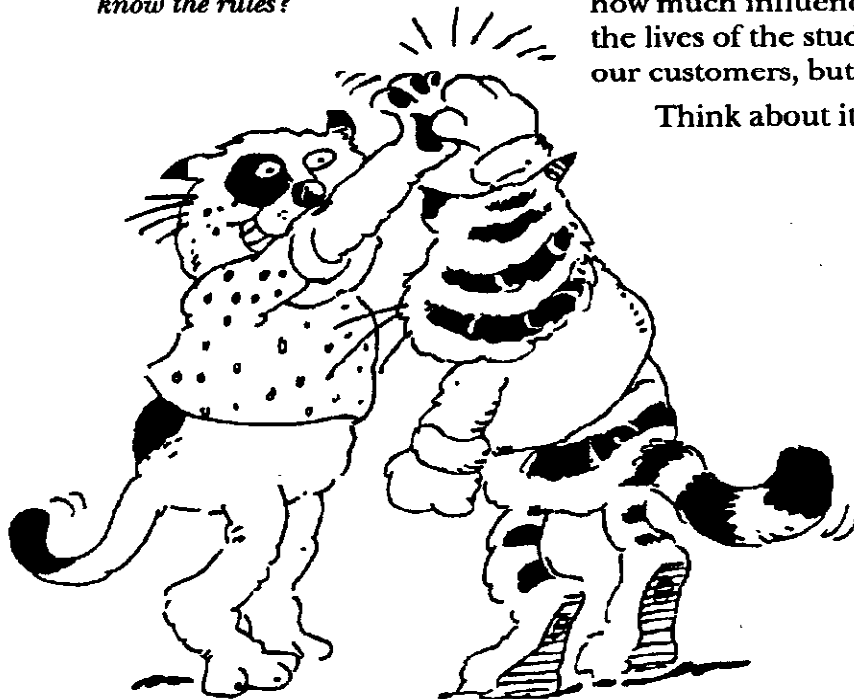
9. Employee wearing serving gloves picks up spilled food from the floor, puts it in the garbage and goes back to the serving line.

10. Employee: "You want fried? Don't you know that's bad for you. You want to get fat?"

Employees can be especially effective in promoting good food choices at point-of-sale. When the overweight kid with a hamburger is about to ask for French fries, this is how the server heads him off, "I thought you'd want a salad with your burger, and I made this especially for you."

Commercial food service businesses spend megabucks teaching their employees the techniques of personal selling because they know how important suggestive selling and staff attitude is to their business. Sometimes we don't think about how much influence we have in the lives of the students who are our customers, but we do.

Think about it.



Segment 3 - Serving Strategies

Offering meals with new and novel service methods improves business three ways:

- Adds interest and variety to eating in the same school dining room year in and year out.
- Speeds up service so students don't wait as long
- Gives students who want to make their own decisions the feeling of control.

That's why buffets and self-service soup and salad bars are so popular. Self-service is easy for staff, takes little special equipment, and is popular with customers. Self service in school meals is entirely appropriate, even for small children, when all the choices are good choices and the equipment meets their needs (for example, child-sized salad bar).



The conditions are that self-service must offer all meal requirements and students must select a meal that qualifies for reimbursement. Self-service bars must have a sneeze shield and means of keeping cold foods cold. Remember that crushed ice is a great merchandising prop. That's why convenience stores keep cold drinks in tubs of ice near the cash register.

Breakfast is an easy meal for self service. Put the juice and milk in ice where students can help themselves. (Of course put the low-fat milk in front!) If necessary post a neat sign, "One to a customer," but students soon learn not to take advantage.

Bulk cereal can go in big salad bowls, with help-yourself fresh fruits such as bananas and berries. Individual cereal boxes are a more expensive option but one that gives students more choices.

Self-service lunch bars require minimum special equipment. Portable carts that can be set up in the kitchen and rolled into place save a lot of staff time. To keep costs in check and make sure meals conform to requirements, some foods such as meat and cheese should be pre-portioned. We have more control when the bar is set up near the cashier.

These are some of the possibilities we might consider:

- Taco or burrito bar
- Pasta or Italian bar
- Loaded potato bar



- Soup and sandwich bar with a variety of breads and sandwich fillings
- Submarine sandwich bar
- Veggie bar

And of course, a salad bar, which may be for side salads or stocked so students can get all the required items in one place. The full-meal salad bar must offer all the meal requirements, and each student must take the proper number of choices so that the meal will qualify for reimbursement.

When they can help themselves, students will try foods for the first time that they never would let us put on their plates.

These are the foods we'd need to offer if we want to start a full-service salad bar:

- Meat and meat alternative - Cheese; egg, tuna, chicken,

turkey, and/or ham salad; bean salad using dry beans or kidney beans; shredded, sliced, grated, or cubed meat, poultry and cheese, hard-cooked eggs.

- Bread and bread alternatives - Croutons made with leftover bread and bread ends, variety of breads, crackers, and bread sticks; macaroni and potato salad.
- Vegetables and fruits - Raw vegetables of any and every kind; pickles and cooked vegetables such as beets and chickpeas, fresh fruits in season and canned fruits of all kinds. In cold months, offer a hot soup, too.
- Dressings - Always include one low-calorie choice, along with peanut granules, chow mein noodles, and Parmesan cheese.
- Milk - Put it on ice right there at the bar, with the whole milk to the back and the low-fat in front.

The key to the successful self-service approach is for students to know how much they can have and portion it themselves. Some schools put out scales, and found that the students diligently weighed their meat and cheese when they could do it themselves.

Is it worth a try? Give customers a measure, and let them portion out the cup or half-cup serving. Let's see what happens.

These are some of the principles of good display when we use bars in our service:

- Feature the "Star;" the product. Enhance the features and qualities of the product being sold and keep the equipment and service in the background.
- Keep it simple. A simple display is easiest to maintain and easiest for children to use.
- Maintain the bar's fresh, neat appearance with constant replacement.
- Make it user-friendly, plenty of food that is easy to reach.
- Observe the same principles when setting up a self-serve bar as when planning a good menu (variety in color, texture, temperature, and shape).
- Feature what's new and in season, give it a fresh look every few weeks with a change of choices.

■ Watch traffic around popular bars; if it gets congested, we'll need to add another line.

Any and all novel serving approaches in

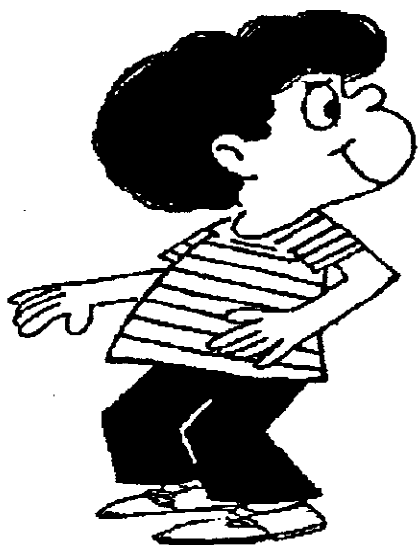
school food service build up our business. Outdoor patio dining is one of the most popular, especially when there's a speedy "walk-through" window where customers can place and pick up an order. We could post choices as the students come in, have everything pre-portioned, ready to drop into a sack as they come by on the way outside.

Food courts that look like what kids see in their favorite mall are tremendously popular. When space is at a premium, we could ask for a few stand-up tables like our customers have seen in airports.

You know, self-service would lend itself to longer breakfast and lunch periods, too. Some schools are serving before and beyond normal hours, for students with flexible schedules, students who work, who have free periods during the day. Longer hours relieve crowding during the regular meal times and build up business.

Is there any reason why we couldn't serve breakfast until mid-morning or offer salad and sandwiches with milk after the regular lunch period is over? Maybe students would come in for socializing or use the dining room for study.

Let's look at all these ideas and decide which ones we want to try first!



Segment 4 - Competing

Why do we talk about all the different kinds of ways to make our service more interesting? Because we want the business, right? We want to compete. We want to win the gold for school food service.

School food service has to compete with snacks from vending machines and vending trucks, with all those off-campus food service places, many of them hangouts for kids. Some kids bring food from home, and some go out and buy snacks at convenience stores.

Why should we care? We talked about why we're here, about our mission. Yes, we are a business, but we are a business that has a more important mission than breaking even. Therefore, you need to know that students who eat in any of the above places get fewer nutrients than if they ate in the school dining room. We provide one-third of their daily nutrient requirements.

Eating elsewhere, they average only about 20 percent of their requirements. That's not enough to believe they are well nourished and ready to learn. Our reason for wanting all students to participate is

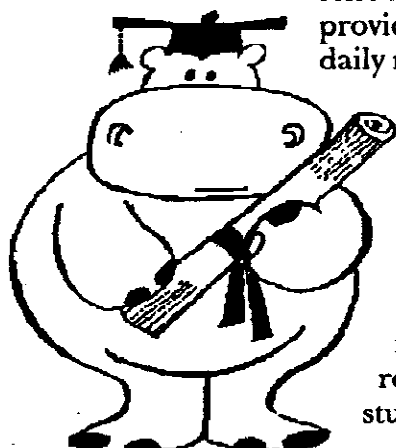
so they will be ready to learn, so they will learn lifelong good food habits.

What do student's favorite fast food hangouts have going for them?

- Food consistent and of good quality
- Pleasant atmosphere
- Friendly employees well trained in suggestive selling
- Prices that fit student budgets
- Fast service
- Advertising. (The biggest chain spends close to \$1 billion a year to promote its product.)

Can we compete? Let's see where we are and what we really can do.

Activity - Class discussion. Go through each point and get staff input. Find out if they have workable suggestions for improvement, if they are content with present service, if they will offer to make improvements. Find out how they feel about themselves and their jobs. Write down on chalk board, flip chart, or transparency exactly what plans and commitments come from the staff. Later make a check list, and post the list where everyone can review it. Check off each improvement or service as it is achieved.



**To the
instructor**



For this segment you will need:

Chalk board or flip chart

Copies of improvement plan form for each class member (page 15)

Copies of market plan from Lesson 2 for each group of three or four

Food quality -
Dining room atmosphere -
Nonverbal communication -
Verbal communication -
Prices -
Fast service -
Advertising -

When we talk about price and advertising, we are talking about money, so those things seem to be beyond our control, but let's look closer.

Everybody loves a bargain. Everyone wants something for nothing. Perhaps we can compete that way.

We can advertise in the school paper (print an advertising flyer if school doesn't have a paper), maybe print a coupon with a reduced price on some food item that we want to feature.

We could advertise special deals on the school public address or tv channel. For example, a two-for-one deal on salads or an all-you-can-eat veggie bar. We can promote our product and our service by giving small prizes or stickers for participation or for choosing healthy foods.

You see, we have something that our competitors don't have. We have free advertising opportunities with direct marketing flyers and messages on menus going home to parents, bulletin boards, banners right here in

school. We have a chance to pull in customers with special meal deals that we may not be using to fullest advantage.

Activity - Instructor review the marketing plan handout from Lesson 2. Then divide the class into groups of four. Have each group suggest and plan in detail one simple promotion that can be used in the following month. The plan must include an objective, a time table, cost (if any), ideas for posters or banners or other means of advertising the special promotion, staff activities and assignments, and expected outcome. Schedule every good plan at intervals of about once a month. Use all of the plans that are practical.

We have one other competitor that we have not discussed. That is the management companies. These for-profit companies are eager to get into the school market. We feel that we are able to do a better job than the management companies because we aren't expected to make a profit.

Those of us in the Child Nutrition program have motivation that might differ from the management companies. We want to see our program and our jobs stay in our local communities. We are members of this community, and we care about our jobs, our schools, and our students.

We can be sure, however, that the management companies are interested. They promote their programs to the administration and to the school boards.



We need to keep all market segments informed about the good things we are doing. This should be an ongoing process.

The management companies are not a threat as long as we continue to do a good job of meeting our customers' wants and needs and operate efficiently. Let's review our market segments, what they want, and how we meet those needs.

(from Lesson 2, page 14)

We do need to review these lessons every year and score ourselves on how we are doing. When each of you has an idea that will help all of us improve our service to the customers, write it down, bring it up, and let's all take a look. Together, working as a team, we can do the best possible job and make a difference in the lives of the children we serve.

Pass out review puzzles. Pass out key the next day.

Together, working as a team, we can do the best possible job and make a difference in the lives of the children we serve.

Accompanying Materials

The following materials are available from NFSMI to supplement this lesson.

High Time for Low Fat Certification course curriculum developed by Mississippi Department of Education to teach managers. Contains multitude of ways to lower fat and to market programs. To be available from NFSMI in 9/95.

Marketing Child Nutrition and accompanying printed material "Marketing is AIDA" are designed to help directors, managers, and other members of the Child Nutrition team expand their ideas and to visualize new methods of marketing. The marketing video and materials may be used along with the three lessons or as a separate unit. The theme for the first three lessons is *Through the Looking Glass*. The lessons will assist

staff in understanding the importance of marketing through good food, attractive serving lines, and well-groomed employees.

ET 4-92 (all materials) ET 4-92(A) marketing materials.

Satellite teleconference/seminar videotapes, approximately one hour each. Each tape may be purchased alone or with the accompanying handout material that was distributed at satellite sites.

(1) ***Personnel That Make a Difference*** is designed for those who are responsible for hiring and training new employees to work in Child Nutrition Programs.

(2) ***Promoting Healthy Food Practices*** gives practical guidance for marketing and promoting healthy food practices. Features many examples of program promotions from around the country.
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Lesson 4 - On the Line

Handout

Review Puzzle

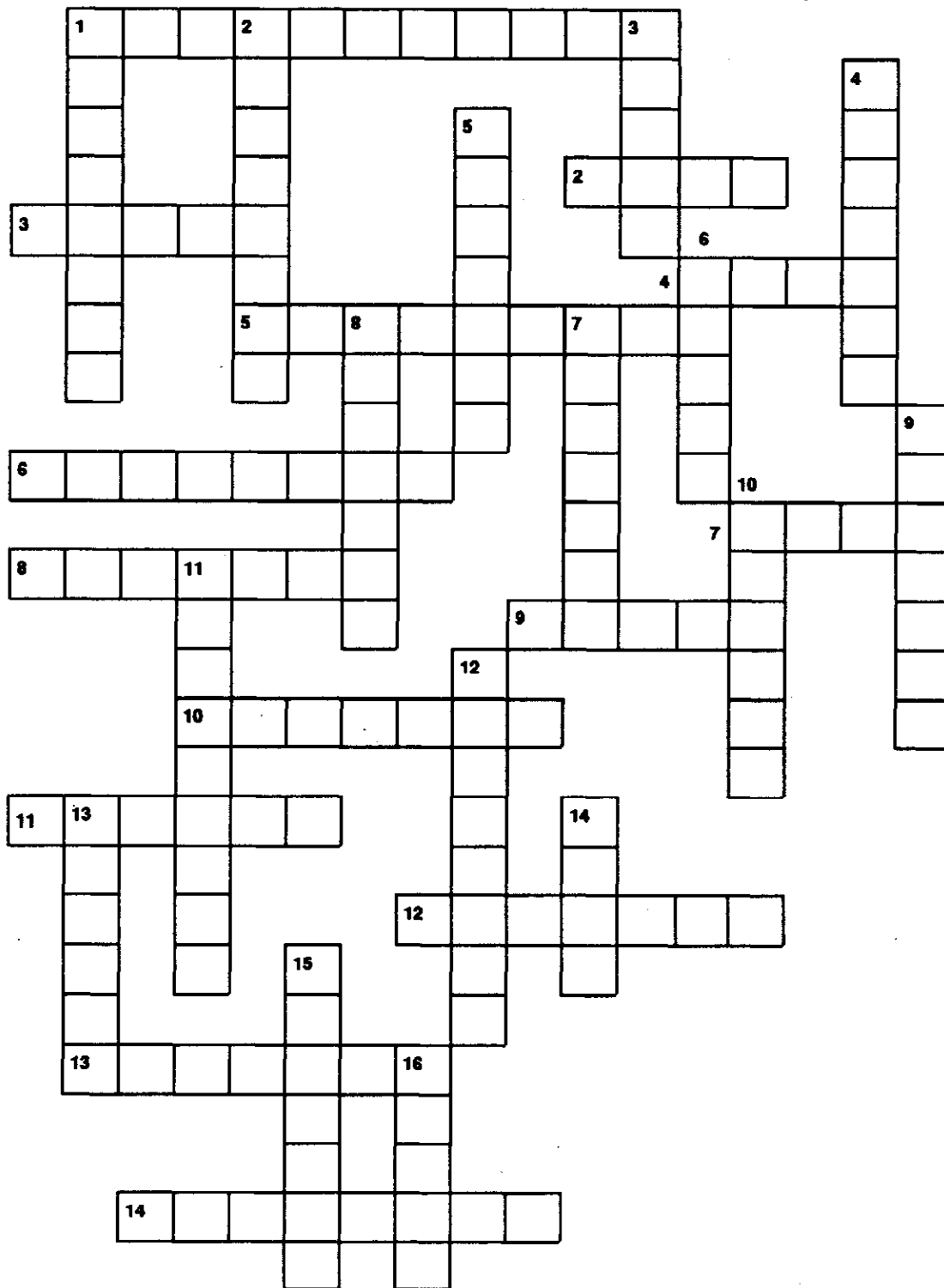




Self improvement plan

Quality standards	What we can do to improve
Food quality	
Dining room atmosphere	
Verbal communication	
Nonverbal communication	
Prices	
Fast service	
Advertising	

Review Puzzle Key - Lesson 4



Review Puzzle - Lesson 4 Definitions

Fill in as many words as you can from the definitions. If you get stuck, the key words are all listed on the right. Find the word that matches the definition that fits in the space.

Down

1. What we want to satisfy
2. The most effective kind of selling
3. We should remember
4. What staff can do to encourage good food choice
5. Students want this feeling
6. What we want students to be ready to do
7. The kind of service customers want
8. One of our competitor types
9. One way to market meals at point of sale
10. Popular form of service
11. Personal selling is a good one
12. What school food service is
13. We form these when we are young
14. The size trays for the best displays
15. Give customers for portioning
16. One way to improve service

Across

1. Every business has
2. One of these builds business
3. Save staff time
4. Where suggestive selling happens
5. We can do it even without a budget
6. One component of personal selling
7. Popular form of service
8. Students can do it themselves
9. Associated with decisions customers make on the serving line
10. What customers want staff to be
11. Every one should be good
12. The suggestive kind is what servers do
13. We get back what we send out
14. Always pays

Hint List

personal
selling
customer
competition
line
learn
habits
influence
business
advertise
deal
instant
half
display
combo
helpful
attitude
suggest
staff
choice
signals
names
courtesy
technique
speed
control
buffet
bars
portion
measure
vending

Review Puzzle Key - Lesson 4

